the weekly
Standard

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JOHN PAUL THE GREAT

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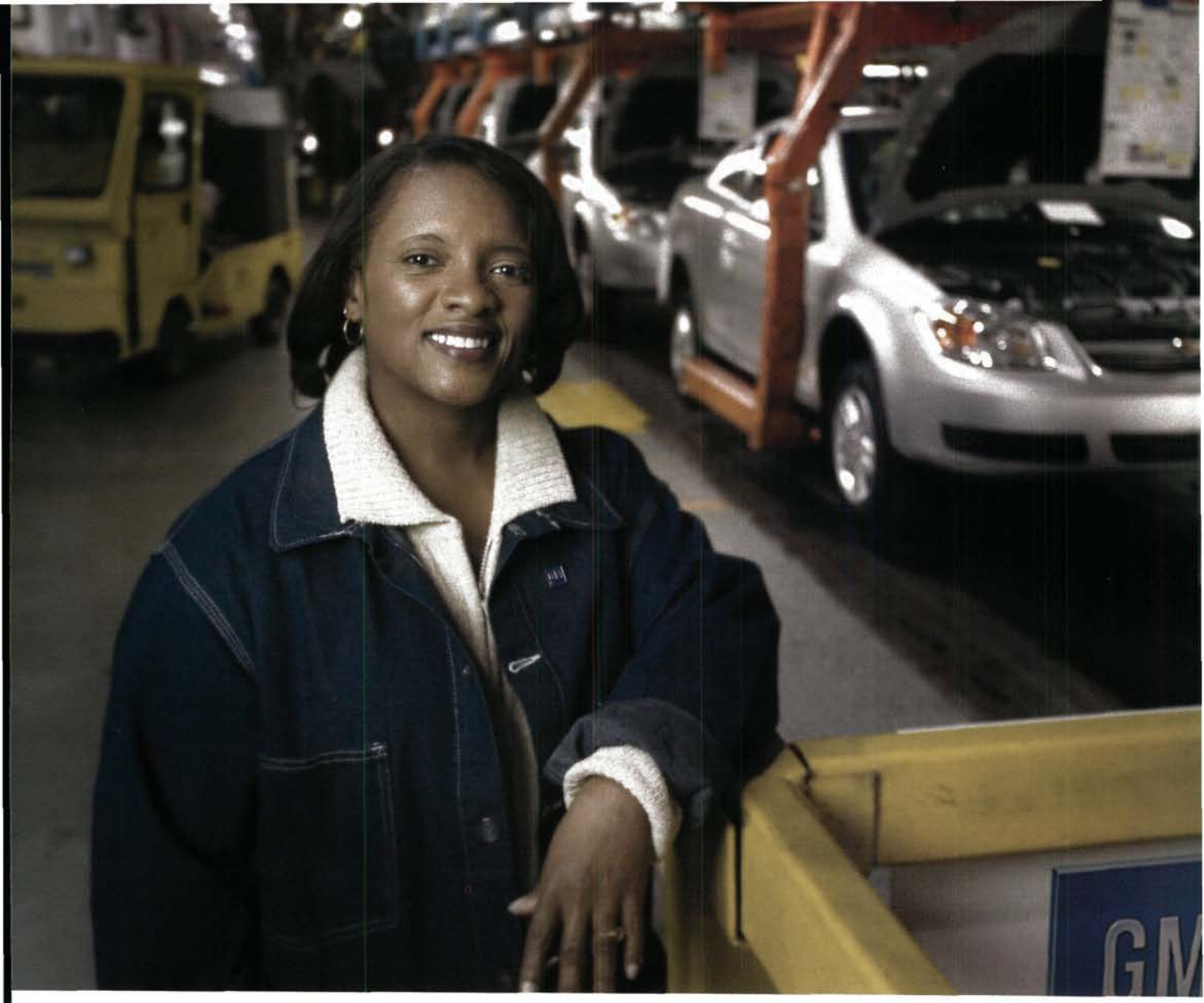

I'm one in a million.

Everyday nearly 1,000,000 Americans earn their living helping GM build and sell cars in the United States. I'm one of them. My name is Penny Jackson and I'm an Assembler on the Cobalt line at GM's plant in Lordstown, Ohio. To me and my family, it's the most important job in the country.

Penny Jackson

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The Great Man Theory of Lawbreaking

Ever since April Fool's Day, when Clinton national security adviser Samuel L. "Sandy" Berger admitted in U.S. District Court that he had removed classified materials from the National Archives on two occasions in the fall of 2003 (and had personally destroyed with scissors three of the documents he pilfered), THE SCRAPBOOK has taken great pleasure in rereading moldy newspaper clippings and television transcripts from July 2004, when news of the investigation into Berger's theft first leaked.

Of the hundreds of articles written last summer, and the hundreds of TV minutes logged, our favorites are those in which Berger's lawyer, former Clinton counsel Lanny Breuer, jumped through rhetorical hoops to prove his client was the victim of a Republican "character assassination."

Sandy Berger didn't know what he was doing when he took the documents, Breuer insisted; how dare those awful Republicans make Sandy Berger the focus of a "partisan" investigation; and (this was the heart of the matter) how dare anyone impugn the conduct of such a great American. That, in a nutshell, is what Breuer told CNN host Wolf Blitzer on July 20, 2004:

> BLITZER: The suspicion is, and it's simply a suspicion, that he deliberately threw away that document or shredded it or destroyed it because he feared if it was in his possession he would be in violation of some sort of law.
>
> BREUER: Wolf, I think the only people who are making that allegation are people who today are going on TV and on radio and are trying to spin this in a political firestorm. Not once has the Department of Justice made that allegation. It is categorically false. Anyone who knows Sandy, who knows every ounce of Sandy Berger is that of a great patriot and it's sad that today people are making these kinds of assertions.

It's what Breuer told Katie Couric on July 21. "Katie," he said,

> any notion that this document . . . was taken for some purpose, is (a), false, and secondly, it's shameful in my view that people would make such accusations of Sandy Berger, a man who has really devoted his entire life to public service, and to the safety and security of the United States.

And it's what he told host Bill Hemmer on CNN's *American Morning* that same, um, morning:

> BREUER: It's really sad, in my view, Bill, that a man of Sandy Berger's stature and a man who has so selflessly devoted his life to the betterment of the United States' security and safety is being accused of such things, for purely partisan purposes, days before the 9/11 Commission report is coming out.

According to a Justice Department press release issued the day he pled guilty, Berger "knew he was not authorized to remove the classified documents from the Archives," but that didn't stop him. "Initially, Berger did not tell the Archives staff that he had taken the documents," the press release went on, "but later that night told Archives staff that he had 'accidentally misfiled' two of them. The next day, he returned to Archives staff the two remaining copies of the five documents he had taken during the September and October visits." He had destroyed the other three.

"He kind of knew that ultimately he'd have to return the documents," someone close to Berger told us last week. "Better get caught returning two than five." The source continued: "A lot of the facts that came out last summer were wrong." But we doubt Lanny Breuer's losing any sleep over it. He did what advocates are paid hundreds of dollars an hour to do.

More baffling are the echoes of the "great man" defense coming from unpaid advocates, like the *Wall Street Journal* editorial page, which last week argued that the Berger plea—in return for a $10,000 fine and loss of his security clearance for three years—"looks to be a reasonable outcome" and that "prosecutors have shown some commendable restraint against a high-powered political figure."

Well, we're certainly not arguing for prosecutorial overreach, but shouldn't the law treat high-powered figures just like low-powered figures? As the *Journal* editorial concedes, "lesser officials have received harsher penalties [than Berger] for more minor transgressions." We hope our friends on the right won't make a habit of speaking power to truth. ♦

Credit Where Due

Almost a hundred readers emailed us for the sound file of the Harvard law students' musical send-up of Laurence Tribe (which can now be heard at *www.law.harvard.edu/students/orgs/drama/parodyhome.htm*). Former Tribe students and high-octane D.C. lawyers were heavily overrepresented in this sample, but don't worry, guys, we're not giving up your names.

We should, however, have named the parodists, who risked their future partnerships to give the rest of us a few cheap laughs at Tribe's expense (but judging by the credentials of their fans, their careers are still assured). Alphabetically: Jamie Auslander, Jeremy Blachman, Taylor Dasher, Andi Friedman, Rebecca Ingber, and Justin Shanes. ♦

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"Non-fake but Inaccurate!"

In an article in our April 4 issue, "The ABCs of Media Bias," we reported—inaccurately, it turns out—that the crass memo touting the partisan advantages for Senate Republicans of defending Terri Schiavo "didn't come from" Florida senator Mel Martinez. Having been shown the memo by a reporter on March 20, Martinez then insisted, "I reject those [talking points]. I've never seen them before today." Last Wednesday, however, Martinez admitted that the memo had in fact been written by an aide, who has now resigned.

Mike Allen of the *Washington Post*—who with ABC's Linda Douglass first reported the existence of the memo—last week revealed that Iowa Democrat Tom Harkin was given the memo by Martinez, who clarified in a statement that he had been clueless about what was on the piece of paper he gave Harkin on the Senate floor. "Unbeknownst to me, instead of my one page on the bill, I had given him a copy of the now infamous memo that at some point along the way came into my possession," the freshman senator said.

Slate's Mickey Kaus, to whom THE SCRAPBOOK owes the headline on this item, argues that the *Post* and ABC, while vindicated on the authorship of the memo, overplayed the story:

> The whole "memo" fuss . . . was wildly overdone *even if* the memo *was* a GOP leadership document—as if senators never consider what is a good political issue, as if that's a no-no in a democracy. (Phoning Martin Luther King Jr. in jail was a "good political issue" for Sen. John Kennedy—and if you were trying to convince him to make the call that's something you'd have pointed out!) But certainly whatever legitimate valence Allen's "memo" story had depended almost entirely on the impression that the memo revealed and represented the strategy of the GOP leaders who pushed the Schiavo bill. If all that was involved was a staff memo Martinez gave to Harkin, Allen's story was *way* out of whack. The memo wasn't close to being worth the play it got in *WaPo* or in Douglass's report. ♦

Piled Higher and Deeper

In what may be the unlikeliest headline of the year, the Associated Press reported last week: "Harvard Professor Accused of Stealing Manure."

In a story datelined Rockport, Mass., the reporter explained, "A Harvard economics professor has been accused of neglecting the standard market practice of paying for goods and services by trying to steal a truckload of manure from a horse farmer. Stable manager Phillip Casey says Martin Weitzman, Harvard University's Ernest E. Monrad Professor of Economics, has been stealing manure from Charlie Lane's Rockport farm for years."

We had been under the impression that the Harvard faculty was a net exporter of manure, producing far more than required for its own consumption, but we stand corrected. ♦

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Casual

Shea It Ain't So

David Brooks, our fellow scribbler, is in torment. The emergence of a home team in Washington is forcing a break with the Mets, his last link to his native New York City. The Mets out, the Nats in, and what David calls "a spiritual crisis" is upon him. But he needn't mourn. The city David remembers isn't there any more.

Frank Sinatra is dead. In his place we have the likes of Michael Feinstein, a capable entertainer, but with no understanding of the high-risk, dark-to-dawn New York life. "Sinatra . . . defined the glamor of the urban night," Pete Hamill tells us. His successors don't.

Bobby Short is dead. The Carlyle remains, and some of its staff, notably the most famous bellman in New York, Michael, remain. But the Café Carlyle will never be the same—a place that Woody Allen could use in his movies as *the* venue for ending a great evening on the town. Short was living proof that you didn't have to be born in New York to become a New Yorker—talent and a love of the city's glitter were the only requirements for success.

Mike Milken is very much alive, now a successful entrepreneur in California after taking a fall for upsetting the WASP establishment. But in place of the excitement his creative genius brought to the world of finance, we have cops and accountants—Eliot Spitzer and his auditors, finding illegal bookkeeping tricks. Important, but unlikely to contribute as much to the dynamism of capitalism as Milken's unseating of corporate fat cats.

And in place of flamboyant mayors like Jimmy Walker, Fiorello LaGuardia, Ed Koch, and Rudy Giuliani, we have what can charitably be called a colorless billionaire. Michael Bloomberg is certainly more honest than Walker, and a big improvement on David Dinkins, which is a plus of sorts. But it is hard to picture him reading the funnies to the city's kids during a newspaper strike, or asking anyone "How'm I doing?" or rallying the city should it again face a disaster on the scale of September 11. Administrative competence has its virtues, as bookkeeper Abe Beame proved when he took over from the hyper-charismatic John Lindsay, but it sure doesn't make me wake up of a morning eager to watch the goings on at City Hall. Boss William Tweed, who ran the city 140 years ago, was a crook, but left us with the courthouse, paved streets, sewers, and the Brooklyn Bridge, "the longest suspension span ever attempted to that time," and one that required Tweed to hand out over $1 million (in today's money) in bribes to New York aldermen to obtain approval, according to Kenneth Ackerman's rousing biography of the old grafter. Bloomberg is honest, but so far seems unable even to keep Tweed's legacy in good order, much less add to it: The Federal Highway Administration includes the Brooklyn Bridge among 182 New York city bridges classified as "structurally deficient" for lack of maintenance.

Darren Gygi

Then there is basketball. Anyone of a certain age can remember when a ticket to sold-out Madison Square Garden conveyed the privilege of joining the most knowledgeable fans in the world, and watching the Knicks elevate a mere sport into sheer artistry. Instead of cool, quiet Walt Frazier, and courageous Willis Reed playing on one leg to win a championship, we now have Stephon Marbury, the self-professed best guard in basketball, and Allan Houston, who continues to wait for just the right moment to test his injured knee. The Garden will be dark during the playoffs.

Finally, baseball. When Sammy Davis sang the praises of New York, he crooned happily about three baseball teams. That was then, before two went to the left coast in hunt of fans who like to watch their games from glass-enclosed private boxes, where they can't smell the hot dogs, or feel the heat of summer.

True, the Mets, who finally replaced the Dodgers, were fun for awhile. But Casey Stengel is no more—losing now is just that, losing, with none of the fun that Stengel could bring to ineptitude on a heroic scale. We now have two teams: the Mets, who lose because trying to win is just too much work, and the corporate conglomerate that sails under the banner of the New York Yankees. That is not a team, but a merger of individual talents assembled by that great conglomerator George Steinbrenner, who calls his $200-million payroll Yankees "a great entertainment vehicle."

In short, David, adopt the Nationals, forget the Mets. Sinatra had it right when he said, "It was a mess of good years." But the New York you think you are abandoning long ago abandoned you.

On the other hand, if you need an adrenalin fix of the sort that is available where wealth is created, but not available in Washington, where it is merely redistributed, shuttle up and visit for a day, or two, or three.

Irwin M. Stelzer

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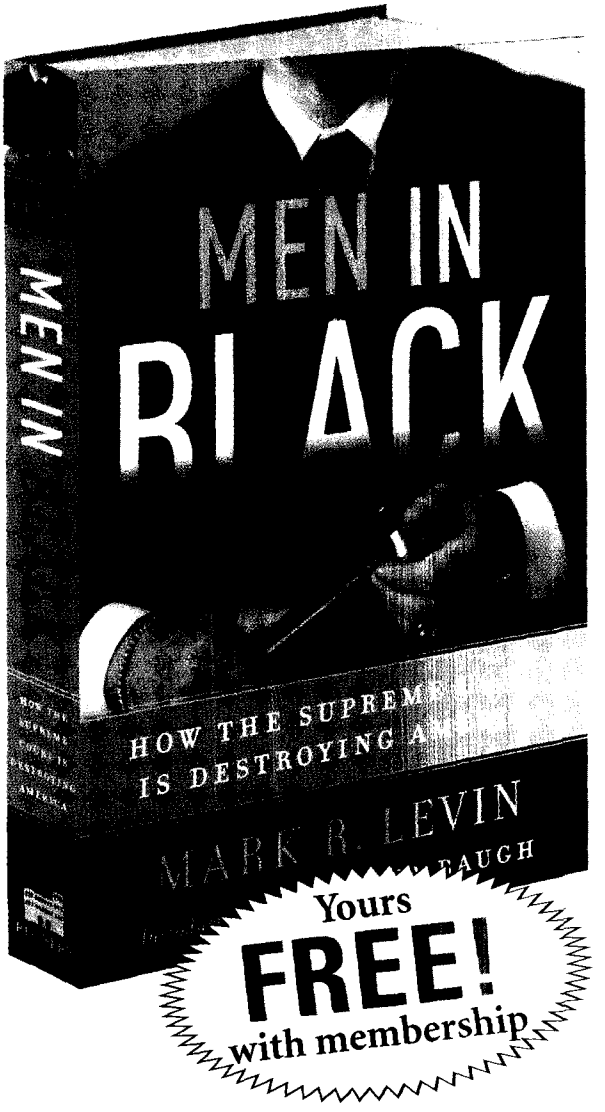
They've done more harm to America than Dan Rather, Barbra Streisand, Martin Sheen, John Kerry and both Clintons combined...



Mark Levin proves once again why I call him "The Great One." He describes a Supreme Court that is out of control and out of order. Men in Black *is a modern conservative classic."*

—Sean Hannity, nationally syndicated talk show host and co-host of the FOX News Channel's *Hannity & Colmes*

From same-sex marriage, illegal immigration, and economic socialism to partial-birth abortion, political speech, and terrorists' "rights," judges have abused their constitutional mandate by imposing their personal prejudices and beliefs on the rest of society. No radical political movement has been more effective in undermining our system of government than the judiciary. And we, the people, need not stand for it.

In the *New York Times* bestseller, *Men in Black*, radio talk show host and legal scholar Mark R. Levin dissects the judicial tyranny that is robbing us of our freedoms and stuffing the ballot box in favor of liberal policies.

If you've ever wondered why — no matter who holds political power — American society always seems to drift to the left, Mark Levin has the answer: the black-robed justices of the Supreme Court, subverting democracy in favor of their own liberal agenda.

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Saving Terri

Eric Cohen approaches the cliff but fails to take the last step over ("How Liberalism Failed Terri Schiavo," April 4). Yes, liberalism failed Terri Schiavo, and yes, as Cohen perceptively notes, it did so by moving beyond the principles of procedural autonomy to embracing those of "ideological" autonomy. As Cohen also rightly observes, ideological autonomy requires liberals to judge the worth of the life being discussed. But on that brink of the truth, Cohen stops.

The ideological autonomy of which Cohen so trenchantly speaks is entirely in keeping with the collectivist core of modern liberalism, and the couching of the ultimate decision in terms of procedural autonomy is likewise consistent with the liberal approach. What the courts in the Schiavo case did was impose their views by appealing to an ostensible desire to succor the individual.

To the courts, society should have properly recoiled from Terri. The judges in their current lucid state would never have chosen to live as Terri was, and since liberals project their enlightenment onto the rest of humanity, that means society as a whole had to reject Terri's continued life. Which means, ipso facto, that Terri in her non-lucid state did not want to live.

The liberal playbook never changes. Explaining the necessity for collective decision-making (meaning, naturally, decision-making by a powered elite) in the name of the good of the individual has been the tactic, witting or not, of every authoritarian government in history.

Cohen should complete the circle he began. Yes, liberalism indeed failed Terri Schiavo. But the reason is that it could not do otherwise.

John Rogitz
San Diego, CA

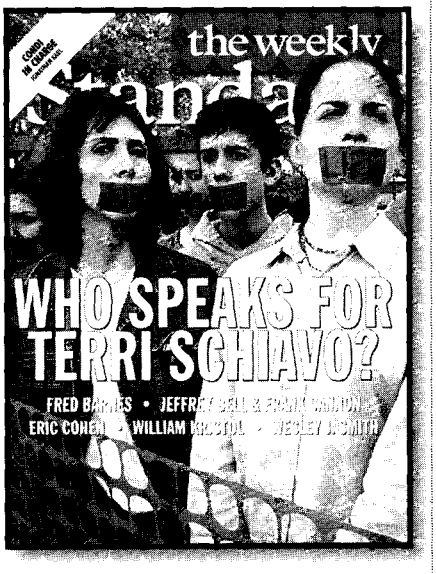
Eric Cohen claims that the Florida district court decided Terri Schiavo's case solely on the basis of Michael Schiavo's testimony about Terri's prior wishes.

This is demonstrably false, as even a cursory reading of Judge George Greer's ruling shows. Greer relied on three witnesses to satisfy himself that a clear and convincing standard of evidence as to Terri's prior wishes had been met.

Cohen also states with certainty several assumptions about Michael Schiavo's state of mind at the time he was deciding on his wife's treatment. Cohen cites no sources for these claims. They are thus pure speculation and have no place in serious moral and public policy consideration of this case.

Laurence B. McCullough
Houston, TX

Eric Cohen responds: Laurence B. McCullough is correct to note that Michael Schiavo's brother and his brother's wife also testified about their recollection of Terri's supposed wishes. But he fails to address the real problem



with how this case was adjudicated: A few casual remarks, over a decade old, recalled by Michael Schiavo and his own immediate family, hardly constitute "clear and convincing" evidence of Terri's prior wishes regarding medical treatment in her specific condition. This is especially so when the primary witness in the case—Michael Schiavo—demonstrated compelling evidence that he did not have only Terri's best interests at heart.

And McCullough fails to address the main point of my article, which is that prior wishes are not the only moral guide we need to follow in caring for loved ones who become cognitively disabled and fully dependent on our care. Might the competent Terri Schiavo have changed her mind if she could have watched this whole case, seen the behavior of her husband, witnessed the suffering of her parents, and known their desire to care for her rather than let her die?

As to Michael Schiavo's state of mind, you need not rely on my speculations but on his own deposition of November 19, 1993, where he describes his multiple other romantic relationships and his initial unwillingness to remove his wife's feeding tube. Or on Dr. Jay Wolfson's Guardian Ad Litem report, where he describes how "Michael's attitude and perspective about Theresa's condition changed" when he realized he would never get back the vibrant wife he once had.

But such a realization hardly provides grounds for breaking the marital covenant with the Terri Schiavo still entrusted in his care—a woman who was not dead or dying, but simply dependent on her husband's devotion.

The Imperial Judiciary

William Kristol correctly heaps scorn on the bizarre decisions recently handed down by our various courts ("'Evolving Standards of Decency,'" April 4).

Among other connections, the Terri Schiavo case, the Christopher Simmons case, and several other recent judicial precedents are related this way: The judicial ruling has in no way considered the law as enacted by the legislature and signed by the executive. These rulings have, essentially, reflected the personal whims of the judges—whims that then become enforced as the new law of the land.

If that is the way the law of this country is going to be, then I must ask, Why should anyone obey the law? Why should there be the slightest respect for a "rule by law" if no such rule by law exists? If the courts set aside the law when and as they please, then we have no law—only absolutism. And if people are forced to live under absolutism, then why should they not start considering first and foremost their own personal interests, with complete disregard for what the law says?

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I am not preaching sedition here, but rather predicting it. Don't these seem natural questions? There has to be a genuine rule of law if a nation is going to hold itself together. If the government of a nation no longer depends upon the laws, then it will soon cease to exist, and become a scattered collection of individuals who seek their own survival, often at the expense of those around them.

BENJAMIN F. LASSETER
Indianapolis, IN

UNFAIR AND UNBALANCED

FRED BARNES makes an excellent point when he singles out the bias of the mainstream media's polls on Terri Schiavo ("The ABCs of Media Bias," April 4). Here's an earlier example: When Terri's feeding tube was removed for six days in October 2003, a poll overwhelmingly showed that people would want their "spouse" to make such medical decisions for them. The only thing is, "estranged spouse" wasn't given as a choice.

How many people would choose their spouse to make medical decisions for them if their spouse was living with a new lover with whom he or she had children? That's a poll I'd like to see.

KATIE BROWN
Philadelphia, PA

A MATTER OF TRUSTS

IT IS STUNNING and shameful that THE WEEKLY STANDARD would publish a lengthy column (THE SCRAPBOOK, April 4) rehashing unsubstantiated statements by a former Pew employee while burying the truth—that the Trusts has stated in no uncertain terms the remarks have no basis in fact—in the final paragraphs. Even more disconcerting, you chose to ignore that the employee has retracted his remarks, stating "at no time in my experience with the Trusts did anyone attempt to hide, deceive or lie," and admitted publicly that his statements were misleading.

From the beginning, the Trusts's grants on campaign finance reform were transparent and intended to be. Any assertion that we tried to hide our support of these grantees is false. As we do with all of our work, we have fully disclosed our support for grantees working on campaign finance reform in a variety of forms over the last nine years.

The remarks of the former employee and THE WEEKLY STANDARD have done a huge disservice to the organizations and policymakers who have been working to address this important issue for more than 30 years. In reality, opponents are trying to reverse the demonstrable, positive progress that has been made to improve political campaigns in the United States.

I trust you share our commitment to transparency and accuracy and that, in the future, you will better serve your readers by giving them all the facts.

REBECCA W. RIMEL
CEO, The Pew Charitable Trusts
Philadelphia, PA

SLAPSHOT

I WAS SHOCKED TO READ Matt Labash's "Welcome to Canada" (March 21), in which he showed how little Americans really know about our culture in Canada. To label us a haven for "Nazi war criminals, drawing-room socialists, and hockey goons" is not entirely correct. Sure, there are a few hockey goons up here. But those individuals ultimately get jobs in police work or in Canadian military units protecting American troops in the opium capital of the world (Afghanistan).

Labash makes it sound like every Canadian drives a Zamboni. Not true. Driving a Zamboni is a right of passage for a selected few. Stats show that only one in seven men get their Zamboni license—and only then after many attempts. You try cleaning the ice with only one hand on the wheel (I'm sure you've figured out that the other hand is holding a Molson) and getting close enough to the penalty box to pick up refills.

And try doing all this work in the fifteen minutes between periods. Zamboni drivers tend to build up one arm, the drinking arm, before making the transition to hockey goon.

Labash's comment that "You can tell a lot about a nation's mediocrity index by learning that they invented synchronized swimming" is a low blow, eh! We Canadians invented that sport so we could check out the chicks in the pool. Substitute "beach" for "pool" and you have the same reason that Americans invented Spring Break.

And speaking of spring and sports, while your country is totally immersed in basketball madness, would this be a good time to remind WEEKLY STANDARD readers that basketball was invented by a Canadian?

JOHN TOWNSON
Victoria, British Columbia

• • •

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the weekly Standard

Bolton's the One

Full disclosure (okay, partial disclosure—let's not get carried away with media ethics breast-beating): John Bolton has been an occasional contributor to this magazine. He served in the late 1990s as a director of the Project for the New American Century, which I chair. And he is a friend.

More than all that, though, he is an exceptional choice to serve as our next U.N. ambassador. He should be confirmed quickly and easily by the Senate. He has, after all, been confirmed for high government positions four times before. He has served in those posts with distinction during three administrations, untainted by a hint of scandal or a murmur of corner-cutting. He has been an exemplary public servant.

He also, as it happens, supports President Bush's policies, and as undersecretary of state worked hard to advance them in the first term. So the Democratic party, led by George Soros and the *New York Times*, thinks he shouldn't be permitted to continue to serve President Bush.

Despite Soros's millions and the *Times*'s resources, the assault on Bolton has been pathetic. What does it amount to? He's a longtime U.N. skeptic—appropriate, one would think, given the U.N.'s "Zionism is Racism" history during the Cold War, and its ineffectiveness (to be kind) in Rwanda in the '90s and in Sudan in this decade. But he's worse than a skeptic, the critics say: He has been disrespectful of the august body in which he will represent us. Why, he once joked, "The Secretariat Building in New York has 38 stories. If it lost 10 stories, it wouldn't make a bit of difference." Well, truer words were never spoken.

But there's more. During George W. Bush's first term, Bolton occasionally tangled with colleagues and overruled subordinates. He asserted, in a speech cleared by other agencies of the government, that Castro was seeking to develop biological weapons. His statement was identical to a statement made earlier by another State Department official, Carl Ford, assistant secretary for intelligence and research. Both were based on intelligence that was later repudiated.

Aha: intelligence that was later repudiated! Wasn't Bolton part of that nefarious cabal that distorted intelligence in the first term, especially with respect to Iraq? The *New York Times* says so. In a fulminating editorial (but I repeat myself), the *Times* claims, "After the invasion of Iraq, complaints that top advisers to the president had attempted to make intelligence reports conform to a preconceived conclusion about Saddam Hussein's weapons programs were often aimed in Mr. Bolton's direction."

But this is false. Bolton was not much involved in the Iraq/weapons of mass destruction issue. In the mountains of the *Times*'s own reporting on this issue—much of it critical of the administration—Bolton is barely mentioned. Indeed, the *Times* has never quoted anyone complaining about Bolton with respect to Saddam Hussein's weapons programs.

Furthermore, even if Bolton had been involved in Iraq intelligence, it's hard to know what the problem would have been. Consider this statement by former Democratic senator Charles Robb, co-chairman of the commission that reviewed the intelligence failures with respect to Saddam's weapons of mass destruction:

> We looked very closely at that question. We—every member of the commission was sensitive to the number of questions that had been raised with respect to what we'll call politicization or however you want to describe it, and we examined every single instance that had been referred to in print or otherwise to see if there was any occasion where a member of the administration or anyone else had asked an analyst or anybody else associated with the intelligence community to change a position that they were taking, or whether they felt there was any undue influence. And we found absolutely no instance, and we ran to ground everything that we had on the table. . . . We got a fair amount of information that didn't provide us anything more in this area.

The case against Bolton is silly and weak. Democrats want to embrace it. Let them do so, and let Republicans make them pay a price. When Bolton is reported out of committee, Senator Frist should schedule floor debate without a time limit. Republican senators should challenge their Democratic counterparts to debate John Bolton's record, and the U.N.'s record, every day, for as long as the Democrats want. The Bush administration should put senior spokesmen on TV every night to engage in an argument over whose foreign policy is preferable for the country—George Bush's or George Soros's. Republicans should welcome a discussion of whether the U.N. is just fine as it is, or requires tough-minded reform. In stimulating such a debate, Bolton would be doing yet another service to this country.

And then he can go to New York as ambassador to the United Nations and get to work chopping 10 stories off the Secretariat building.

—*William Kristol*

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The People's Pope

Scenes from the funeral.

BY GERARD BAKER

KRT / Romain Blanquart / Detroit Free Press

A family in St. Peter's Square listens to the funeral on Polish radio.

Rome

MARIA, a twentysomething from Poznan with a gentle face, looks at me through bleary eyes. She has slept all night on a low wall that surrounds the Castel Sant'Angelo, a perch with a distant view of St. Peter's Basilica. Given that the wall looks about 10 inches wide, and that she seems to have had only a thin plastic mattress for comfort, I say to her that this is quite a feat. She shrugs and insists she's not so tired. The rims of her eyes tell a different story, but the redness may just be from the tears she has been shedding all week.

Even as Maria contemplates returning home—she'll have to catch another ride from a stranger and drive another 25 hours—she is unfazed. "I could not have missed this. It would be like not going to the funeral of a close member of my family."

Maria is one of an estimated two million Poles who in the last week boarded trains, clambered onto already full buses, hitchhiked, or, if they were really lucky, found space on crowded charter planes before the Roman authorities closed one of the city's airports, to express their unbounded gratitude, respect, and above all love for Pope John Paul II. Here they met with perhaps three million others from all over the world who poured into this eternal city, and waited—waited more than 36 hours to glimpse the dead pontiff's body or waited in a sports stadium that gave them a distant, half-obscured view of the funeral ceremony last Friday.

Much has been said already about the extraordinary legacy of Pope John Paul II, but it was only at his funeral that I truly grasped the scale and range of this man's achievements. It was, curiously, in the choreography of the occasion that the impact of the late pontiff on the spiritual, social, and political life of humanity could best be seen.

Encased in a simple coffin made of cypress, marked only by the sign of the cross, Pope John Paul II's remains lay on a small bier, resting on an ornate carpet before the altar on the steps of St. Peter's. Behind the altar sat 180-odd cardinals, the princes of the church, resplendent in red robes.

To the cardinals' right sat a fair number of the world's religious leaders. In the front row sat the archbishop of Canterbury, the first ordained head of the Anglican church ever to attend such an event. There were Eastern Orthodox prelates and representatives of other Christian denominations. But there were also rabbis and imams, a powerful reminder of another achievement of the late pope. It is easy now to take for granted friendly relations among Catholics, Protestants, Jews, and moderate Muslims. But it was during John Paul's pontificate that the biggest advances were made: He was the first pope to visit a synagogue and a mosque.

To the cardinals' left sat the temporal leaders of the world, monarchs, presidents, prime ministers—from Europe, America, the Middle East, Asia. They had seen a papacy that not only played a pivotal role in liberating millions of people from communism, but also led millions of Catholics to see their faith as a practical guide to their earthly life, not some remote function of the soul. The brave stands John Paul II took on abortion, euthanasia, marriage, and other matters may have been ignored by some Catholics, but they helped promote these issues in the public consciousness. Every one of those leaders who attended the funeral knows better now than ever that one billion Catholics are willing to play a positive role in politics—and that they will not be ignored.

It would be expecting too much to ask that the next pope step up to John Paul's level, even if the Holy Spirit is working overtime. But this great man's legacy will live on, in any case.

Gerard Baker, U.S. editor of the Times *of London, is a contributing editor to* THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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He has already changed the world, made it freer, more spiritual, more aware of the challenges to human dignity and life. As Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, the archbishop of Westminster, said in Rome last week, John Paul's legacy is assured. It is "the legacy of a papacy that was not only in the service of the church but in the service of the world." ♦

A Global Papacy...

And its foes.

BY JEFFREY BELL

THE FIRST READING of the Catholic Church's daily mass for Friday, April 8, 2005—the day of the funeral in Rome for Pope John Paul II—comes from the Acts of the Apostles. It describes a meeting in Jerusalem of the Sanhedrin, the highest council of the ancient Jewish nation. Peter and several of the other apostles have been arrested and brought before the Sanhedrin, and have announced their intention to continue preaching the good news of Jesus Christ. The Sanhedrin's initial reaction? "When they heard this they were enraged and wanted to kill them."

The Friday reading describes how one of the most respected members of the Sanhedrin, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, rises to speak, asking that Peter and the other apostles be taken outside for a time. Gamaliel, a doctor of law identified later in Acts as the mentor of Saul of Tarsus, recounts the fate of two Jewish rebels of earlier decades, Theudas and Judas the Galilean. Each of them had made an initial splash—in the case of Theudas, Gamaliel says "a number of men, about four hundred, joined him"—but after the rebel leaders were killed, their followers "dispersed and came to nothing." In the light of these precedents, Gamaliel advises prudence:

> "So in the present case I tell you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this undertaking is of men, it will fail; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them. You might even find yourselves fighting against God."

The reading ends with the Sanhedrin grudgingly taking Gamaliel's advice. Peter and the others are recalled to the council room, where it is ordered that they be flogged and then released.

This reading was not heard in St. Peter's Square on Friday; it was preempted by readings more appropriate to a requiem for a pope. But if it had been read, it is hard to resist the thought of a chill running down the spines of the hundreds of thousands crowded together in the vast square, not to mention the estimated two billion television viewers—one third of the world's population—of the funeral of Peter's successor. By the criterion laid out by Gamaliel, is the Church of today more likely to be the product of men or of God?

The papacy of John Paul marked the first instance in human history of a spiritual leader who achieved global recognition and impact in his own lifetime. He went to more than 100 countries, drew by far the biggest crowds in history—an estimated six million in a single outdoor Mass in Manila—and was the pivotal figure in the cracking open of the Iron Curtain, beginning with his first papal visit to Poland in 1979. The most brilliant and dangerous of all Soviet dictators, Yuri Andropov, sensed this threat from the beginning. Almost certainly, he approved the attempt on John Paul's life by Mehmet Ali Agca in May 1981, more than a year before gaining supreme power on the death of Leonid Brezhnev. If that shooting had succeeded, world politics would surely have taken a different and more ominous turn.

The array of political leaders present in St. Peter's Square last week was a testimony to John Paul's political consequence, just as the presence of so many non-Catholic religious figures was a testimony to his relentless, decades-long ecumenical outreach to the world's other faiths. The presence of these leaders felt appropriate, even inevitable, yet it represented a stark contrast to the last two papal funerals in 1978, when the Carter administration was represented by the first lady, Rosalynn Carter, Vice President Walter Mondale, and the president's mother, Lillian Carter. The full measure of John Paul's achievement was the contrast of his standing at his death to that of Paul VI, who in his last, passive years often appeared the personification of a papacy under siege.

There is of course no shortage of observers—many of them seemingly on the roster of "consultants" hired as commentators for the funeral mass by David Westin of ABC News—who are ready to explain that the global elevation of the papacy under John Paul, while in some sense undeniable, will soon prove something of an illusion. They argue that for all the pope's triumphs in the realms of political change and personal charisma, he was as isolated from the modern world, and even from his own church, as his predecessor, and for pretty much the same reason: his failure to adapt to the sexual revolution, and particularly his refusal to budge from Pope Paul's 1968 encyclical *Humanae Vitae* and its widely ignored ban on artificial contraception. The symptoms, they argue, are as clear as ever: The decline in vocations to the priesthood and the religious orders has left a church that,

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while expanding significantly in total worldwide membership, is only beginning to feel the consequences of a stagnant and aging clergy, particularly in its core areas of Western Europe and the Americas.

Especially humiliating, they argue, is the papacy's utter irrelevance to the religion and politics of today's Western Europe. The Catholic churches are still empty, vocations to the priesthood virtually nonexistent. Even more striking, the same pope who in his first 12 years in office helped transform the politics of Europe, ending the argument between democracy and communism with a decisive victory for democracy, has been utterly rebuffed by the continent's new political power, the European Union.

The pope fought fiercely, but in vain, for the new E.U. constitution to include a reference to the Christian roots of European culture. Not any present significance, mind you, but merely the roots. Any attempt to write this omission off as a harmless bit of cosmetic multiculturalism was shattered by the decision of the European Parliament last year to reject the first proposed cabinet of the E.U. solely because it included an Italian friend and biographer of the pope, Rocco Buttiglione, who was in the midst of a personal scandal. The scandal, in the eyes of the elected legislators of the new Europe? Buttiglione is a practicing Catholic who agrees with the moral teachings of the Roman Catholic Church on such subjects as contraception, abortion, and homosexuality as affirmed by Pope John Paul II.

At least in Western Europe, it is clear that secularism and its hallmark, the contraceptive society, is on the verge of total victory, Catholicism and traditional Christian morality on the verge of total defeat. What is only beginning to be realized by Western elites, including many Catholic churchmen in Europe, is that the cultures where this picture is accurate are also the cultures most likely to be in the process of liquidating themselves.

This is brought home by perhaps the most important book published in 2004, Phillip Longman's *The Empty Cradle: How Falling Birthrates Threaten World Prosperity and What to Do About It*. Longman, himself a secular liberal who worries about the rise of traditional religion as a side effect of the trends he sees, is nonetheless a detached and unsparing analyst of today's mushrooming demographic crisis. Among his findings is that the plunge in human fertility is a worldwide phenomenon, extending to strongly religious Muslim countries and to countries that are not only miserably poor, but show little sign of attaining Western-style affluence. Such affluence was previously thought to be a necessary precondition of the sharp declines in fertility already beginning to take a visible toll in Japan and the Western European welfare states, with their rapidly aging and heavily taxed work forces. The relentless effort of Western elites to impose a culture of contraception far beyond their own borders has been too successful to allow complacency or a tempting *Schadenfreude* on the part of conservatives like me who disagree.

The pope fought fiercely, but in vain, for the new E.U. constitution to include a reference to the Christian roots of European culture.

It is perhaps fitting that the developing country where Western elites have had their greatest success in exporting contraceptive culture—the People's Republic of China, with its (according to Longman) nearly suicidal One Child policy—is run by the only government of any consequence electing not to send a representative to the funeral of Pope John Paul II. China, of course, does not recognize the Roman Catholic Church. It is also the only large country whose citizens were not permitted to view the pope's funeral on television.

In his 1988 essay "The Contraceptive Culture," conservative social and economic analyst George Gilder called *Humanae Vitae* "the great prophetic document of our time." Gilder, himself a Protestant, argued that widespread acceptance of abortion is the

> unavoidable harvest of a society devoted to contraception as the favored condition of the act of love. . . . The Pope exactly identified its fundamental problem, and made a number of very specific prophecies about the result of its spread. He said that men would come to objectify women, that they would leave their families, that general immorality would emerge. He exactly identified the set of problems that currently is sweeping through the United States, and that pose the single most serious threat to the future of the nation.

Gilder predicted that quantum theory and computer technology were on the verge of discrediting the Newtonian physics that had given rise to materialism and the contraceptive culture in the first place. Gilder, who has more than once been vilified for being right much too early in a national debate, may have seemed a lonely voice in the context of 1988, and his essay was pretty much ignored. In the context of 2005 and our worldwide demographic meltdown, his analysis of the dangers of contraception is if anything too specific to the American scene.

The worldwide battle between the increasingly dominant contraceptive culture and the morality of John Paul (and the millions from other faiths increasingly likely to agree with him) is barely beginning, the ultimate outcome anything but clear. But back in the formerly Christian portion of Europe, it may begin to seem odd to dwell on the disappearance of priestly vocations in the coming generation, in the face of the disappearance of the coming generation itself. ♦

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Enablers of Tyranny

South Africa abdicates its regional responsibilities.

BY ROGER BATE

FRESH FROM THE CHARADE of his latest rigged reelection, Robert Mugabe, dictator of the disintegrating country of Zimbabwe, had the effrontery to show up in Rome for the funeral of Pope John Paul II. Mugabe was raised a Catholic and still sometimes is seen at mass, though his record as a political leader is anything but saintly.

The U.S. State Department called the March 31 election "seriously tainted," and European leaders joined in the condemnation. Crucially, however, the observer mission from the Southern African Development Community approved the result. The neighboring governments guilty of condoning this blatant fraud—foremost among them, South Africa—should be made to pay a price in their relationship with the United States.

The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), fearful of provoking a violent crackdown if it staged street protests and dubious of the value of a legal challenge, remains paralyzed in inaction. Ordinary Zimbabweans are furious. "We should have boycotted the elections. If we had maintained the boycott, [Mugabe's] ZANU-PF would have had no one to steal the election from," shouted mechanic Mafios Mukeudzei, as celebrating thugs from the ruling party drove past his garage a few days after the vote.

But higher-ups—Mugabe, the Southern African Development Community, and the larger African Union—all wanted the election so they could maintain the fiction that Zimbabwe is a democracy.

Given the absence of a free press, the government's use of food as a political weapon, widespread intimidation by the ruling party, and even murder, all of which have worn down most opposition, Mugabe may have believed his Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front would actually win the popular vote. He allowed foreign journalists entry a week before the election, and while many opposition activists were hampered from doing their job by being denied access to voter registration rolls and polling stations, there was no systemic violence against the opposition. Mugabe even allowed most people who wanted to vote to do so—although in several key constituencies, many would-be voters' names were not on the rolls, while their dead relatives' were.

After years of speculation over nightmare scenarios, the fraud was astonishingly simple. Where ZANU-PF looked as though it would lose key constituencies, it simply announced bogus results. It could do this because there was no independent monitoring of the ballots. But inattention to detail and poor coordination by ZANU-PF meant even this relatively secure approach was exposed almost immediately, when the tallies announced by two different electoral bodies failed to jibe.

First, officials of the ZANU-PF-run Zimbabwe Elections Commission announced the number of people who had cast ballots in each constituency at the close of voting. Meanwhile, the police radioed results to the National Logistics Committee in the capital, Harare. Many hours later, the Logistics Committee released the official election results.

I have now seen records documenting over 30 discrepancies between the two sets of results, but three quintessential examples will suffice. In Beitbridge, the Elections Commission announced that 36,821 votes had been counted, yet the Logistics Committee counted only 20,602 votes, with ZANU-PF winning. In Goromonzi, the Elections Commission claimed 15,611 voters, but according to the Logistics Committee the winning ZANU-PF candidate alone received 16,782 votes. Similarly, in Makoni North, the Elections Commission counted 14,068 voters, while the Logistics Committee gave the ZANU-PF candidate 18,910 votes.

The Elections Commission figures would have been hard to fake, since they reflected counted voters and were issued immediately upon the closing of each polling station; whereas, the National Logistics Committee had hours to come up with its count, and at a secret location in Harare. In perfect Mugabe style, no observer mission—indeed, no outside party—had access to the Logistics Committee. The South Africans admitted at their media briefing that they did not visit the committee—indeed, that they did not even know it existed.

The ruling-party leaders showed a breezy lack of embarrassment that these discrepancies were witnessed by observers. Their unconcern shows that President Mugabe knew the Southern African observers would endorse his election no matter what—short of violence at the polls.

Clutching at straws, a spokesman for the opposition MDC party, Dave Coltart, said, "If we can provide clear evidence of fraud we will remove any last hope that Mugabe may have of proving legitimacy. . . . When you have such blatant rigging, it's only a matter of time before it gets exposed."

The problem for Coltart is that the fraud has already been exposed, and nothing will happen. Tom Woods of the State Department said prior to the election that the United States "would not hold the region hostage

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AP Photo

Robert Mugabe greets crowds at a rally in Gutu, 135 miles south of Zimbabwe's capital, March 17.

over Zimbabwe." Unthreatened by Washington, regional leaders proceeded with business as usual. MDC leader Morgan Tsvangirai has so far ruled out legal challenges over the poll, which may be the right call given that his complaints over the 2000 election are still pending, although to make a simple complaint would cost little energy. He has also ruled out armed struggle, and considering the ruthlessness of the army and police, this may be wise too. But anger over another stolen election is turning to despair, and Tsvangirai needs to act quickly or see his leadership crumble.

Catholic archbishop Pius Ncube says the MDC should have thought of "a plan to get Mugabe out. . . . Here in Zimbabwe people are so pushed around by Mugabe they usually take the results and say, 'Ah, ah, what a pity.' They want to leave it up to God. What I say is that God helps those who help themselves." Ncube is extraordinarily brave, but unlike other Zimbabweans, he has some protection from the Vatican and Mugabe's Catholicism. But he is also right: Action is required, now.

Emulating the recent Ukrainian uprising, as Ncube wants, will be very difficult—no neighboring countries are really friendly to the opposition, there are no free media to summon people to the streets, and the police may repress protesters brutally. But as I write, independent media representatives are still in Zimbabwe, and could still report any action by the opposition.

Sheperd Matetsi, a 26-year-old mechanic, was game for protest the day the results were announced. "We're waiting for word from Tsvangirai," he said. "If he gives the word, we will go to the streets, . . . although there is some risk to life. But he hasn't called." And as AK-47-toting soldiers fanned out across the suburbs of Bulawayo in an effort to prevent any large gatherings, people waited.

Most likely, Tsvangirai and the MDC will avoid a confrontation, and opt for a series of strikes, a natural response from a former union leader. But strikes are a pitiful weapon against a president who has already demonstrated that he doesn't care if the economy collapses. By the time you read this, if protests are not in full swing, Zimbabwe could be stuck with ZANU-PF misrule for many years to come. The State Department's Tom Woods told me, "It remains our goal to ensure that when the time of transition back to democracy is upon us, those Zimbabweans who must carry the country into the future are prepared to do it."

As Mugabe's position strengthens, the more important political interactions are between the United States and Southern Africa. Dave Coltart, the opposition spokesman, wants the State Department to announce that it will have to review the Southern African countries' eligibility for trade deals and aid under the African Growth and Opportunity Act. While

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these countries may be more democratic than Zimbabwe and just about meet the requirements of the act, any long-term confidence Washington might have in them has been undermined by their willingness to endorse gross electoral fraud.

South Africa's abdication is especially depressing. As the leader of this election whitewash, Africa's most powerful state is flirting with a dangerous retreat into the all-too-crowded ranks of unserious, even odious, regimes that dot the continent. As some worried commentators in South Africa are now saying, it is no longer unthinkable that the ruling African National Congress, the party of Nelson Mandela, might follow the path taken by ZANU-PF. Only a strong signal from Washington, like the withholding of aid, is likely to convey to President Thabo Mbeki the grave concern with which the United States would view any South African retreat from the path of democracy. ♦

Misunderstanding John Paul II

A herd of independent media minds chew on the papal "paradox." BY DUNCAN CURRIE

RONALD REAGAN'S DEATH last June posed a dilemma for much of the press. How do you hash out the posthumous legacy of a man who, in life, you failed to understand? The befuddled fourth estate deployed the principle that says the simplest explanation is best. Reagan succeeded, they reckoned, because he was a jovial, lyrical optimist who cheered us up.

As with Reagan, press coverage of Pope John Paul II's legacy has tended toward the simplistic. Western media types needed to analyze how a man rooted in an ancient faith harnessed the tools of modernity and spearheaded radical political change. Often lacking a firm grasp of doctrinal Catholicism, they broadly settled on this theme: The late pontiff embodied contradiction, so his papacy proved schizophrenic.

Thus, as the pope lay dying, CNN's Paula Zahn asked former Maryland lieutenant governor Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, "Is there a paradox, do you think, in his papacy?" To which Townsend replied, "I do." A day later, after John Paul had died, CNN's Christiane Amanpour, reporting from Rome, was "so struck by the seeming contradictions of this pope. . . . A pope who embraced AIDS victims and who went to Africa and talked to them . . . and yet who refused to sanction the use of condoms to stop the spread of AIDS." Host Anderson Cooper concurred. There were "contradictions inherent in much of his rule."

Writing in the *New Republic*, E.J. Dionne Jr. argued, "'A sign of contradiction' was a favorite John Paul phrase, and it might be said to define his papacy." Why? Because "so much of what the Pope did in relation to the world outside the Church was progressive, [but] so much of what he did inside it was conservative." And much of the Western press was right in step. Said London's *Financial Times*: "His record is suffused with paradox. He was a beacon of freedom at the end of the Cold War yet his absolutism could brook no dissent." In a piece titled "Pope John Paul II's legacy of paradox," the *FT*'s Robert Graham and Tony Barber claimed his "exceptionally long pontificate" had reeked of inconsistency. "Paradoxically for someone so internationally adventurous and innovative, his spiritual and pastoral legacy was that of a conservative."

In the London *Independent*, columnist Joan Smith described the John Paul "paradox" as follows: "This doughty opponent of communism was little short of Stalinist in his intolerance of dissent and relentless centralisation of power." Writing in the same paper, journalist Paul Vallely noted (much less acidly) that "above all Pope John Paul II was a figure of paradox." He was at once "radical" on some issues and "deeply reactionary" on others. "The secular world never understood this man of contradictions," Vallely admitted. Perhaps proving Vallely's point, London's *Guardian* labeled John Paul "one of the most complex and paradoxical figures of his era."

Back on this side of the Atlantic, the *New York Times* called him a "complicated figure" to Catholic eyes: a "champion of freedom," yet one who "brooked no dissent" and "resisted all attempts to liberalize the church's teachings on birth control, abortion, homosexuality, priestly marriage, divorce and the ordination of women." A front-page story in the Milwaukee *Journal Sentinel* chimed in accordingly: "Inspirational and paradoxical, John Paul vigorously defended human rights and freedoms in the secular world while centralizing authority and limiting theological debate in the global church." Veteran reporter Carl Bernstein, a John Paul biographer, commented on MSNBC: "I was particularly struck again by the contradictions in Karol Wojtyla, which many people have remarked on over the years, but how, in the end, his papacy is so defined by some of those contradictions."

Rick Hampson distilled this theme nicely in *USA Today*. John Paul, Hampson wrote, "was contradiction

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personified. In the world, he was a liberal, fighting for political freedom and religious tolerance. In the church, he was a conservative, fostering the traditional, hierarchical Catholicism he knew in Poland." Hampson went on: "He espoused human rights around the globe, yet stifled dissent in the church. He reached out to people everywhere, yet those at the margins of Catholicism felt ignored. He alienated many liberals, gays, and feminists by refusing to reconsider church doctrines." As if revising the teachings of the church were the job of the vicar of Christ.

Some writers cited the conservative aspect of the pope's legacy to vent their own dim view of the church's teachings. John Paul's pontificate, tut-tutted the *Washington Post*'s Richard Cohen, "serves to remind that faith . . . can be a form of blindness." Cohen pointed especially to the pope's anti-condom obstinacy. His Holiness "no doubt loved" the "poor and the ignorant"—"but not in a way that gave them truly effective control over procreation or protection from AIDS." Christiane Amanpour said it more explicitly on CNN. "So many people have died because of his strict sanction against using condoms to stop the spread of AIDS."

Unexamined by most was the context for the rejection of contraception—the church's understanding of human sexuality, a gift of God and a subject on which John Paul reflected and wrote extensively. Indeed, it seems to have escaped the notice of many that the Catholic Church recognizes God, not the pope, as the author of the faith. If Jesus preached, say, against divorce or for forgiveness, it isn't in the power of the mere bishop of Rome to teach otherwise.

Few journalists explored the possibility that what looked to them like inconsistency was actually fidelity to the essential doctrines of the Church. One who did was E.J. Dionne—not surprisingly, a Catholic. As he, at least, put it in the *New Republic*, "The Pope's version of consistency does not necessarily match that of the world that is judging him." ♦

Losing the Social Security Battle

And how to win the war.

BY STEPHEN MOORE

PRESIDENT BUSH'S PLAN to create personal retirement accounts for Social Security, which seemed so promising a few months ago, is now officially floundering. Senate Republicans are now crafting a compromise proposal that takes personal accounts off the table. Meanwhile, House speaker Denny Hastert recently said "not this year" for Social Security reform. And Democrats remain united in their "just say no," obstructionist strategy.

Despite all this, there's still a path to victory for reformers—though little chance of instant gratification. If the debate over the past months on Social Security has established anything, it is that the Ponzi financing scheme for Social Security—an invention of FDR and the architects of the New Deal—is living on borrowed time. The political momentum here and in dozens of other nations is on the side of the privatizers.

Let's start with a proposition that seems increasingly self-evident: This is a fight for the long haul. The White House and Republican political strategists probably deluded themselves into believing that the stars were finally aligned to whip personal accounts through Congress this year. That calculus now appears to have been wrong. The conundrum for the White House has been how to rally even token Democratic support for modernizing Social Security.

For eight weeks now the White House has been romancing the few remaining moderate Democrats in Congress with compromises and concessions to gain even a tepid endorsement for personal accounts. Each overture has been spurned. Whether Republicans offer tax hikes, benefit cuts, add-on personal accounts paid for out of general revenues, and even means-testing, the response has been the same: no to personal accounts. The left's inalterable and irrational opposition to private accounts parallels their aversion to concepts like school vouchers. In both cases it seems to matter not a whit to congressional Democrats that the beneficiaries of reform would be the very minority and low-income workers they claim to champion.

In short, the national Democratic party has erected a Berlin Wall of opposition to meaningful Social Security reform. Many political analysts (myself included) believed that after having been wiped out in the last two elections because of their bullheaded obstructionism, Democrats would be in a more accommodating frame of mind. Nope. And despite all their recent casualties, they still have sufficient forces to go on obstructing.

But even though personal accounts may go nowhere this year, reformers can still take heart. Here's why. First, the policy debate is completely commanded by conservatives' ideas, not the left's. That's a political victory in itself. Second, if Republicans lose the fight this year, they have in many ways further imprinted in voters' minds the message that the Democratic party is reactionary and devoid of ideas. Republicans, by pressing boldly for personal accounts, have succeeded in demonstrating again that they are the party of reform. To most Americans, the main

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DNC/Brookings Institution/AARP talking point on personal accounts—that the program doesn't need fixing—is almost laughable.

Finally, and most important, losing the first round of the battle, if it comes to that, doesn't automatically discredit the idea. Consider the transformational policy milestones of recent decades. It has taken more than 20 years from the time President Reagan announced SDI, to almost universal skepticism from the intellectual class, for the missile shield program to become a (mostly) accepted component of our defense strategy.

Welfare reform was proposed by conservatives in the late 1970s, and slowly gained traction thanks to the intellectual spadework of Charles Murray and other scholars, but it wasn't until 1996 that the Great Society welfare program was toppled. And when it was, almost half of the Democrats voted for work requirements, time limits for benefits, and greater autonomy for the states. Jack Kemp recently reminded me that in 1978, when he first introduced what later became known as the "Reagan tax cut," the measure received fewer than 80 votes on the House floor. Three years later Kemp and Reagan prevailed.

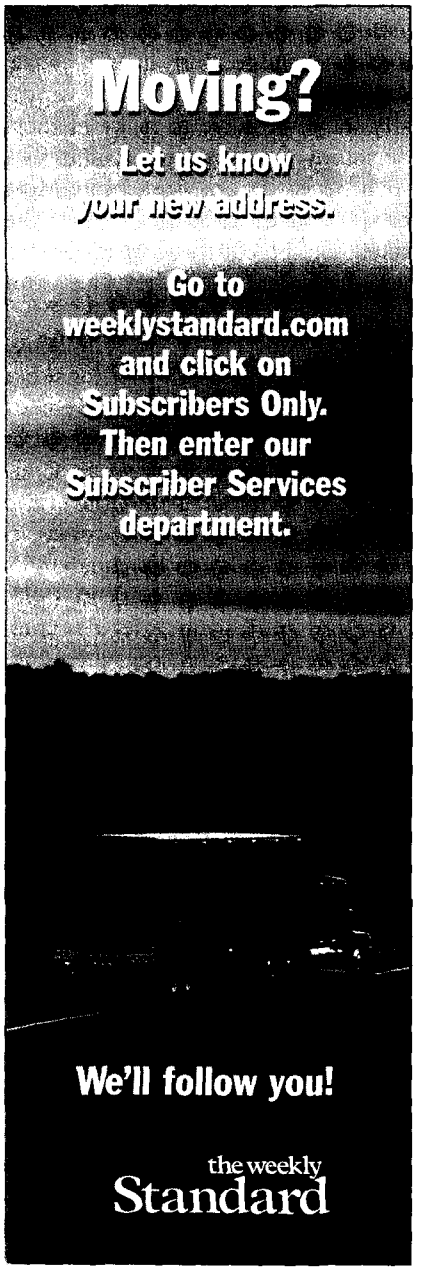
Most deeply ideological battles require years of public battle and argument before the electorate buys into the change agenda. So where does the White House go from here? Get back to first principles and sell the upside of personal accounts—ownership, personal control, a more secure financial future, and the prospect of hundreds of thousands of dollars of real personal wealth for every worker. Republicans must resist the trap of embracing plans that ask workers to pay more, work longer, and get less. The past two months of such discussions have led to exactly zero Democrats jumping aboard the president's personal account alternative. In politics as in poker: Stop drawing cards and tossing in chips on a losing hand.

The solvency problems of Social Security are, of course, very real. But this tsunami of red ink headed our way is arguably a more acute political problem for Democrats than for Republicans. Dr. Thomas Savings, an economist at the National Center for Policy Analysis, calculates that if entitlement programs are not restrained, within roughly the next 20 years all federal tax revenue collections will be absorbed for the purposes of sending out retirement checks and paying for the health care and prescription drug expenditures of senior citizens. The rest of the left's multitrillion-dollar policy agenda will be stillborn. If the Nancy Pelosi vision of nirvana is for the federal government to simply become an income transfer program from young to old, then so be it. Why should Republicans fall on their swords to fix entitlement programs so that money will be freed up to fund the whole playpen of liberal programs?

Finally, to put the Democratic obstructionists in an especially uncomfortable position, it would make sense to start proposing fallback positions that at least get personal accounts started. One idea would be to defuse the fatuous "risky stock market" argument by simply offering a plan where workers can have a private account, but are permitted to purchase only Treasury bills. Take the stock market out of the equation and there is not even the odor of risk with personal accounts.

Another idea: Since almost all Americans, regardless of political party or age, are infuriated by the practice of Congress "raiding the trust fund" and spending the surplus payroll tax revenues on road programs, Pentagon salaries, and Lawrence Welk Museums, why not just place the surplus payroll tax collections into millions of personal accounts? This would allow workers to direct about 2 to 3 percent of their paychecks into individual accounts without in any way jeopardizing benefit payments. The only fail-safe way to prevent the continuing trust fund raid by Congress is to divert the surplus dollars into personal accounts so they can never be looted again. True, the surplus only lasts for another 10 years, but over that period over half a trillion dollars would be placed in the investment accounts of workers, and the vital precedent of establishing personal accounts would be firmly established.

That is the beachhead that Democrats want desperately to deny President Bush and the reform movement. Freedom does indeed create its own political momentum. And that's why even incremental steps toward Social Security private accounts are well worth fighting for. ♦



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What Living Wills Won't Do

The limits of autonomy.

BY ERIC COHEN

IN THE AFTERMATH of the Terri Schiavo case, it seems clear that most Americans are uncomfortable at the prospect of politicians' intervening in family decisions about life and death. This is not only understandable, but usually wise. Americans understand that eventually they will have to make medical decisions for loved ones, and that such decisions are wrenching. Most people have little faith that the state—or the courts—can make better judgments than they can. And they are usually right.

But it is precisely the complexity of these life-and-death decisions that sometimes makes state involvement inevitable. The state was involved in the Schiavo case long before Congress intervened, from the time Terri's parents went to court in Florida to challenge her husband's fitness as a guardian back in 1993. State judiciaries must decide when family members clash, or when doctors and families disagree, or when surrogates wish to override a loved one's living will. And state legislatures have a responsibility to set the parameters for judicial decisions in particular cases. They must decide the admissibility of casual conversations in determining a person's prior wishes, or the appropriate weight to give a person's desires (such as requests for assisted suicide) even when they are clearly expressed.

For decades, we have deluded ourselves into believing that living wills would solve our caregiving problems; that healthy individuals could provide advance instructions for what to do if they became incompetent; that such a system would ensure that no one is mistreated and that everyone defines the meaning of life for himself until the very end. But it is now clear that living wills have failed, both practically and morally.

In the March-April 2004 issue of the *Hastings Center Report*, Angela Fagerlin and Carl E. Schneider survey the social science data, and their conclusions are damning: Most people do not have living wills, despite a very active campaign to promote them; those who do usually provide vague and conflicting instructions; people's opinions often change from experience to experience; and people's instructions are easily influenced by how a given scenario is described. These are not problems that any reform can fix. A person simply can't grasp in the present every medical and moral nuance of his own future case.

Most people do not have living wills, despite a very active campaign to promote them; those who do usually provide vague and conflicting instructions.

The dream of perfect autonomy—everyone speaking for himself, never deciding for another—should fade each time we change a parent's diaper, or visit a grandparent who does not recognize us, or sell an uncle's property to pay for the nursing home. After all, the only fully autonomous death —with every detail governed by individual will—is suicide. And suicide is hardly a basis for dealing more responsibly with the burdens of caregiving.

As the baby boomers age, we are entering a period when long-term dementia will often be the prelude to death, and when caregivers will regularly have to make decisions about how or whether to treat intervening illnesses like infections, heart trouble, or cancer. When should we accept that death has arrived, and when does stopping treatment entail a judgment that Alzheimer's patients are "better off dead"? What do we owe those who are cognitively disabled and totally dependent?

On these hard questions, the most vocal critics of Congress and "the religious right" in the Schiavo case have revealed the shallowness of their own thinking. Defending the "right to privacy" ignores the moral challenge of deciding how we should act in private, as both patients and caregivers. Asserting that "the state should stay out" of these decisions ignores the fact that some hard cases will always end up in court; that legislatures have a civic responsibility to pass the laws that courts apply; and that a decent society should set some minimum moral boundaries, such as laws against euthanasia and assisted suicide. And claiming that we should "defer to medical experts" ignores the potential conflict between the ideology of living wills and the ethic of medicine, since some people will leave instructions that no principled physician could execute.

In the end, the retreat to moral libertarianism and liberal proceduralism is inadequate. We need, instead, a moral philosophy, a political philosophy, and a medical philosophy that clarify our roles as caregivers, citizens, and doctors attend-

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ing to those who cannot speak for themselves.

Any moral philosophy of care should begin with the premise that disability—even profound disability—is not grounds for seeking someone's death. But seeking death and accepting death when it arrives are very different matters. And while we should not seek death, neither should we see extending life at all costs as the supreme goal of care.

Imagine, for example, that a person with advanced Alzheimer's is diagnosed with cancer, and there is a burdensome treatment (like radiation) that might extend the person's remaining life from three months to six months. In this case, family members seem morally justified in rejecting the treatment, even knowing that an earlier death is the likely result. But they don't reject treatment *so that* the patient will die; they reject it so that the patient will not suffer excessively as death arrives. They choose minimum discomfort, not death. By contrast, if the same Alzheimer's patient gets an infection that is easily treated by antibiotics, it is hard to see any moral ground for withholding treatment. Holding back ordinary care is not the same as euthanasia, but it is still a choice that hastens death as its aim.

In reality, many dementia cases involve multiple illnesses, with uncertain prognoses, and a menu of treatment options. Often, there are various morally justifiable choices. Personal values do matter. But what is always needed is a moral framework that governs such private decisions, based on the belief that every life is equal, and no life should be treated as a burden to be relinquished, including one's own.

Given the infinite complexity of these clinical situations, the scope of the law should always be limited. What is legally permissible is not always morally right, but what is morally wrong should not always be outlawed. Nevertheless, it is foolish to ignore the extent to which the current legal framework shapes how people make private decisions, or to ignore the proper role of the state in setting certain minimum boundaries. Legally, no competent person should ever be forced to accept medical treatment in the present that he does not want. Legally, no one should have the right to commit suicide or procure assistance in doing so, and no one should be killed or forced to die against his will or that of his guardians. And legally, guardians should not be forced to implement living wills that aim at death as their goal.

As for the courts that are called upon to settle certain cases, they will need some political guidance or governing principles to do so. For example, what if a tenured professor of bioethics, unable to bear the loss of his cognitive powers, leaves written instructions not to treat any infections if he ever suffers dementia? Decades later, now suffering from Alzheimer's, the former professor is mentally impaired but seemingly happy. He can't recognize his children, but he seems to enjoy the sunset. He's been physically healthy for years, but then gets a urinary tract infection. All his family members believe he should be treated.

Should the state intervene to prohibit antibiotics—to protect the incompetent person's "right to die"? Or should the state leave the family members alone, so they can do what they believe is in the best interests of the person the professor now is? If Andrew Sullivan and other critics are worried about "theocons" using the power of the state to undermine the right to self-determination, are they willing to use the power of the state to impose death when families choose life? Is this what their idea of "autonomy" really requires?

And this leads us, finally, to the ethics of medicine. We have already gone very far in turning medicine into a service industry and doctors into technicians who simply use their skills to do our bidding. The physicians who perform abortions when the life and health of the mother are not in danger, or the cosmetic surgeons who give breast implants to healthy women, or the doctors who prescribe growth hormone for kids of average height are not really practicing medicine; they are serving desires. Most doctors take their medical oath seriously, struggling daily and often heroically to provide for those entrusted to their care. But some have succumbed to various forms of utilitarianism, or simply believe that people with cognitive disabilities are already humanly dead. In cases like Terri Schiavo's—a disabled woman, not dead or dying, whose feeding was keeping her alive without imposing additional burdens—it is hard to see how any doctor could ethically remove a feeding tube. And if we are to respect medicine as a moral profession, no court should compel doctors of conscience to do so.

As America ages and dementia becomes a common phenomenon, the dilemmas that the Schiavo case thrust onto the nightly news will only become more urgent and more profound. As a society, we will need to navigate between two dangers: The first is the euthanasia solution, and the prospect of treating the old and vulnerable as burdens to be ignored, abandoned, or put to sleep at our convenience. The second is that the costs of long-term care will suffocate every other civic and cultural good—like educating the young, promoting the arts and sciences, and preserving a strong defense.

We will face imperfect options, as societies always do. In navigating the dangers, we will need to rely on more than the gospel of autonomy, and we will need to confront the failure of living wills and the ideology they rest upon: that deciding for others is always to be avoided. In reality, deciding for others is what many of us will be required to do as parents age or spouses decline, and we will do well to accept this burden with moral sobriety rather than pretending it does not exist. ♦

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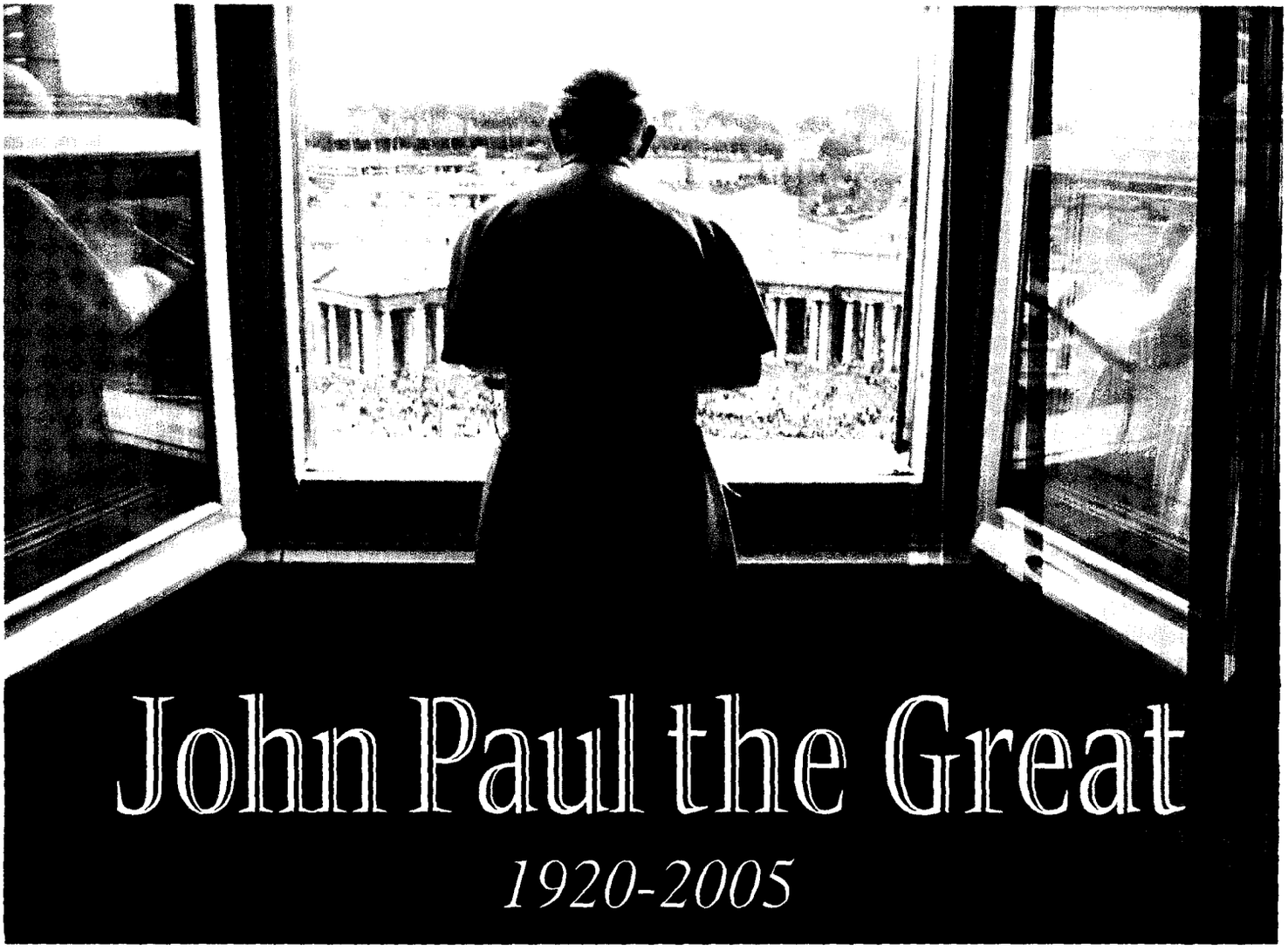

John Paul the Great

1920-2005

By Joseph Bottum

History labors—a worn machine, sick with torsion, ill-meshed—and every repair of an old fault ruptures something new. Or so it seems, much of the time. Our historical choices are limited, constrained by the poverty of what appears possible at any given moment. To be a good leader is, for most figures who walk the world's stage, merely to pick the best among the available options—to push back where one can, to hold on to the good that remains, to resist a little the stream of history as it seems to flow toward its cataract.

For the past decade and a half, John Paul II was a good leader. He had his failures: losing the fight for recognition of Christianity in the European constitution, watching the democratic energy he generated during his 1998 visit to Cuba dissipate without much apparent damage to Castro's dictatorship, seeing his efforts to influence China's anti-religious regime peter out. But he had his successes as well: convincing even his bitterest opponents in the Church to join in at least the verbal rejection of abortion, regularizing Vatican relations with Israel to allow his millennial visit to the Holy Land, inspiring the defeat of the Mafia in Sicily.

With the drama of his final illness and death, he offered a lesson about the fullness, the arc, of human life. With the prophetic voice he used in his later writings, he pointed to spiritual possibilities that were being closed by what he once called the "disease of superficiality." Always he was present, one of the world's conspicuous figures, pushing on history where he could, guiding the Church as much as it would be guided, choosing the best among the available options—doing all that a good leader should.

But before that—for over a decade at the beginning of his pontificate, from his installation as pope in 1978 through the final collapse of Soviet communism in 1991—John Paul II was something more, something different, something beyond mere possibility. He wasn't simply a good leader. He was inspired, and he seemed to walk through walls.

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Certain images remain indelibly fixed—the skeptical Roman crowd, for instance, falling in love with the new Polish pope in the first seconds of his pontificate as he gave his lopsided smile and called out, not in Latin, but Italian, from the papal balcony: "I don't know if I can make myself clear in your . . . *our* Italian language. If I make a mistake, you will correct me." He had a perfect sense of timing, as the actor John Gielgud observed after watching him, and in the whirlwind of those early years he seemed incapable of doing anything that wasn't news: skiing, mountain-climbing, gathering crowds of millions to pray with him everywhere from Poland to Australia, performing the marriage of a Roman street-sweeper's daughter because she'd had the pluck to ask him—snapping the Lilliputian threads of courtly precedent and royal decorum with which the Vatican curia traditionally tied down popes as though he didn't even notice.

The "postmodern pope," American magazines dubbed him, caught up in the media circus of his superstar status, the John Paul II magical mystery tour that swept across the globe through the 1980s. Certainly he had, all his life, the elements of stardom—the whole package of good looks, and charm, and curiosity, and intelligence, and physical presence, and, especially, an obvious and easily triggered sort of *joy*: the ability to please and the ability to be pleased that combine to make a man seem radiantly alive.

As a young priest, he was a polished, careful subordinate, clearly destined for high office in the Church—but he was also a recognized minor poet during a period when Polish poetry was the most flourishing in the world. As archbishop of Krakow, he was a full-time political player in the complex dance of Soviet-dominated Poland—but he was also an important philosophical interpreter of Thomistic metaphysics and Husserlian phenomenology, teaching courses at the Catholic University of Lublin, the only non-state university in the Communist world. As pope, he was a mystic who spent hours a day in solitary prayer—but he was also a natural for television. He seemed perfectly at home receiving the stately bows of ambassadors in the Clementine throne room—but when thousands of teenagers in Madison Square Garden chanted at him, "John Paul II, we love you," he was equally comfortable winning their hearts by shouting back: "Woo-hoo-woo, John Paul II, he loves you!"

And yet, to call all this "postmodern"—to imagine these elements are simple contradictions, absurdly juxtaposed in a characteristically postmodern way—is to believe something about John Paul II that he himself never did. It is to imagine that helicopters are ridiculous beside devotion to the Blessed Virgin, or that prayer gainsays philosophy, or that faith ought not to go with modern times.

This is another form of the poverty of the possible, the thinness of the choices and narratives that seem available at any particular time. Every step John Paul II took in those early years was a denial that our options were as limited as they appeared—in the political life of the world, in the religious life of the Church, and in the intellectual life of our cultures. For the impoverished imagination of the time, he seemed both far behind and far ahead of the rest of the world. But he never saw his medievalism as a reactionary antimodernism, or his modernism as an enlightened anti-medievalism. Christianity always seemed to him simultaneously an ancient faith and the newest hope for the world. He prayed constantly that he would live long enough to see the Jubilee of 2000, for he thought he was called to shepherd humankind into the third millennium that he claimed would be a "springtime of evangelization."

Toward the end of his pontificate, the tyranny of available options may have begun to close in on him. Certainly, in the first days after his death on April 2, the media have proved incapable of picturing him in any way other than caught in the clash of accepted political categories. John Paul II was a voice for peace—but he hated abortion! He was a radical critic of materialism—but he rejected women's ordination! He was one of the architects of the great opening of the Church at the Second Vatican Council—but he disciplined heterodox Catholic theologians!

The *New York Times* oddly and disturbingly used the pope's death as an occasion to editorialize in favor of euthanasia: "Terri Schiavo was a stark contrast to the passing of this pontiff, whose own mind was keenly aware of the gradual failure of his body. The pope would certainly never have wanted his own end to be a lesson in the transcendent importance of allowing humans to choose their own manner of death. But to some of us, that was the exact message of his dignified departure." It's hard to imagine a more egregious use of the word "transcendent" or a more grotesque inversion of the legacy of a man who always insisted that life wasn't a choice but a gift. In truth, however, the *Times* was merely one among many publications that saw the pope only through the lens of current social politics. In all the thousands of obituaries that have appeared in the past week, hardly one failed to speak of the pope's "contradictions" somewhere along the way.

There's a reason. John Paul II's work in the Church must seem a hodgepodge when explained with the old narrative of Vatican II as entirely a struggle between liberal reformers and conservative traditionalists. His theology of the body, laid out in four years of addresses he began in 1979, must appear a mess when encountered with the view that libertines and reactionaries divide between them the

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only possible ways to think about human sexuality. And his politics of rightly ordered freedom must be unintelligible in a world that thinks itself limited to the alternatives of tyranny and radical license.

For the man himself, there was no contradiction at all, and he spent his pontificate trying to create new possibilities for history. You can see it perhaps most clearly in the defeat of communism—when he showed his ability to open doors where the rest of the world saw only walls.

After an unscheduled discussion during the 1979 papal tour of the United States, national security adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski joked that when he met with President Carter, he had the impression of speaking to a religious leader, and when he met with John Paul II, he felt he was talking to a world statesman. It was a joke with a bite. Of all American presidents, Jimmy Carter may have been the one most constrained by his thin conception of the available options, and all he could do was complain—in that failing voice of the would-be prophet he always seemed to end up using—that things ought to be different than they seemed to be.

AP / Andrew Medichini

St. Peter's Square, April 4, 2005

John Paul II *made* them different. There's a temptation to overestimate the pope's role in the demise of Soviet communism. The labor unions, the anti-Stalinist intellectuals, and the churches all contributed enormously. The United States' long resistance during the Cold War, through presidents from Truman to Reagan, held Soviet expansion at bay while the Marxist economies ground toward their collapse: "We pretend to work, and they pretend to pay us" ran a factory workers' joke at the time in the Russian satellites behind the Iron Curtain.

And yet, however weak the Communist edifice may have been in actuality, it still seemed formidable, and the pope was at the center of the cyclone that blew it down. The KGB's Yuri Andropov foresaw what John Paul II would be, warning the Politburo in Moscow of impending disaster in the first months after the Polish cardinal became pope. Figures from Mikhail Gorbachev to Henry Kissinger have looked back on their careers and judged that the nonviolent dissolution of the Communist dictatorships would not have happened without John Paul II.

"How many divisions has the pope?" Stalin famously sneered. As it happens, with John Paul II, we have an answer. At the end of 1980, worried by the Polish government's inability to control the independent labor union Solidarity, the Russians prepared an invasion "to save socialist Poland." Fifteen divisions—twelve Soviet, two Czech, and one East German—were to cross the border in an initial attack, with nine more Soviet divisions following the next day. On December 7, Brzezinski called from the White House to tell John Paul II what American satellite photos showed about troop movements along the Polish border, and on December 16 the pope wrote Leonid Brezhnev a stern letter, invoking against the Soviets the guarantees of sovereignty that the Soviets themselves had inserted in the Helsinki Final Act (as a way, they thought, of ensuring the Communists' permanent domination of Eastern Europe). Already caught in the Afghanistan debacle and fearing an even greater loss of international prestige and good will, Brezhnev ordered the troops home. Twenty-four divisions, and John Paul II faced them down.

When President Carter urged Americans in 1977 to overcome their "inordinate fear of communism," he clearly thought the only path out of the Cold War was agreement to the continuing existence of Communist regimes. This was the lie John Paul II was never willing to tell. It remains a mystery what the organizers of the annual "World Day of Peace" were hoping for when they asked the pope to contribute a reflection in 1982, but what they got from the apostle of peace was a letter denouncing the "false peace" of totalitarianism. In the end, the path out of the Cold War was neither Henry Kissinger's hard realpolitik nor Jimmy Carter's soft détente. It was instead John Paul II's insistence that communism could not survive among a people who had heard—and learned to speak—the truth about human beings' freedom, dignity, and absolute moral worth.

Think of the number of regimes based on lies that gave

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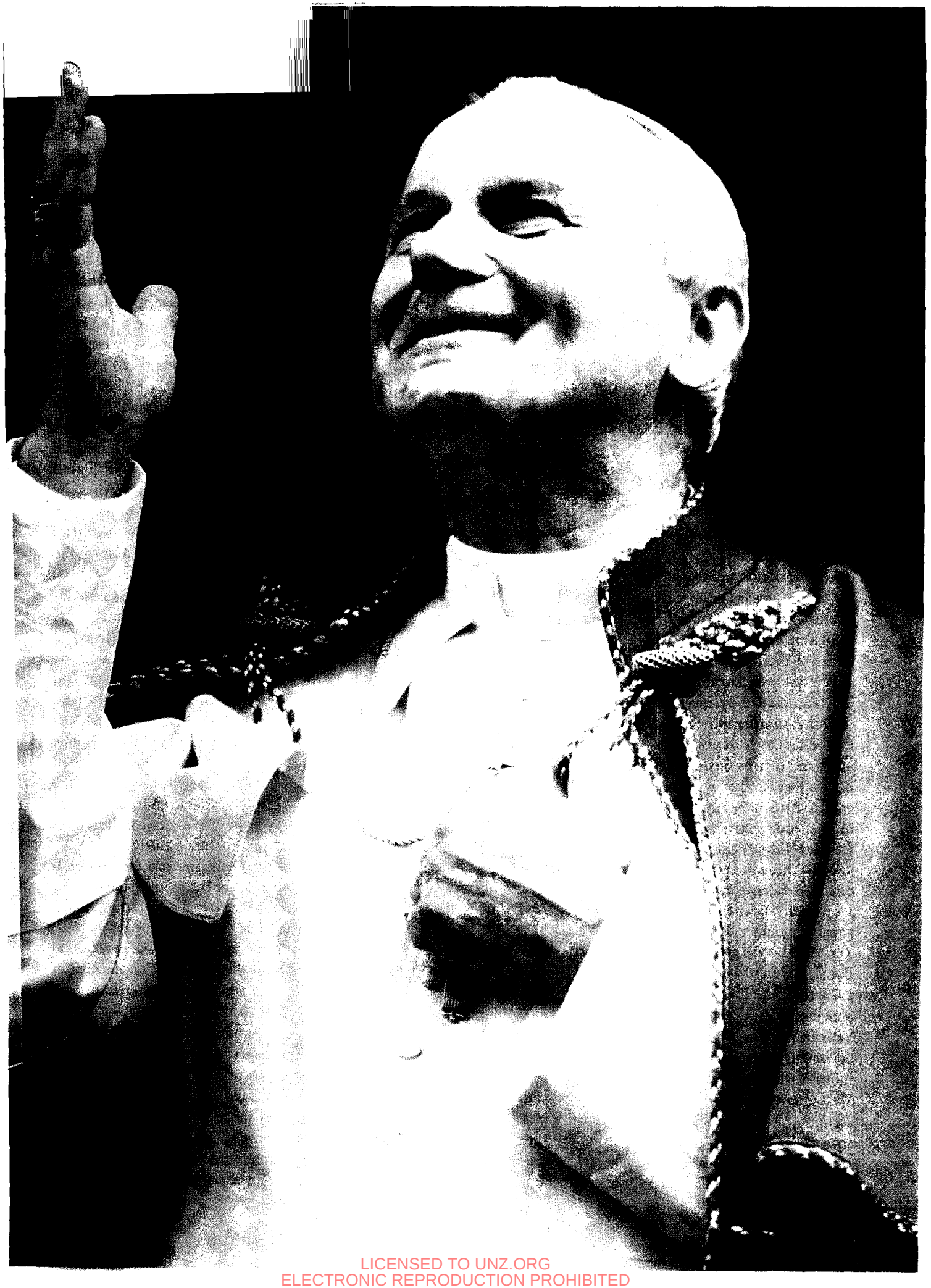

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way without violent revolution during his pontificate. The flowering of democracy was unprecedented, and he seemed always to be present as it bloomed. There was Brazil, where the ruling colonels allowed the free elections that replaced them. There was the Philippines, where Ferdinand and Imelda Marcos fled from marchers in the street. There were Nicaragua, and Chile, and Paraguay, and Mexico. And looming over them all was the impending disintegration of the Soviet empire in Poland, East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Lithuania, Latvia—on and on, people after people who learned from the pope a new possibility for history, born from an ability to hear and speak the truth about the regimes under which they lived.

For John Paul II, the possibility of political truth was a philosophically obvious *fact*, demanded by the theory of personalism he developed as he used the modern phenomenology of Edmund Husserl to move intellectually beyond the dry versions of neo-Thomistic philosophy he had studied in seminary. It was a theological fact, as well, derived from—and pointing back toward—the awareness that human beings are created in the image of their free Creator. It was even a historical fact, learned during the long humiliation of Poland first by Nazi Germany and then by Soviet Russia while he was young. And it became, in the end, a mystical fact for John Paul II, joined—through Mary and the secrets of Fatima—to God's direct providence in history.

Reuters / CORBIS / Jim Hollander

The mystical unity begins, for the pope, in what the papal biographer George Weigel calls the "shadowlands." Yuri Andropov's grim predictions about the impact of the Polish pope did not fall on deaf ears. On November 13, 1979, the Central Committee in Moscow approved a KGB plan entitled "Decision to Work Against the Policies of the Vatican in Relation with Socialist States." Much of the document dealt with issuing anti-Catholic "propaganda" in the Soviet bloc and the use of "special channels" in the West to spread disinformation about the pope. But another section ordered the KGB to "improve the quality of the struggle" against the Vatican.

What this meant became completely clear only with evidence released just last month. Elements of the Soviet security forces, working through the Bulgarian secret service, made contact with a Turkish assassin named Mehmet Ali Agca and aimed him at the pope. And on May 13, 1981, Agca shot John Paul II in St. Peter's Square with a Browning 9-mm semiautomatic pistol, striking him in the belly to perforate his colon and small intestine multiple times. In the pope's last book, *Memory and Identity*—a collection of philosophical conversations that appeared in Italy this February—he shows that he always knew the origin of Agca's attempt on his life: "Someone else masterminded it and someone else commissioned it." The assassination attempt was a "last convulsion" of communism, trying to reverse the historical tide that had turned against it.

But it was also something more. "One hand fired, and another guided the bullet," he tried to explain after he left the hospital. On May 13, 1991, Pope John Paul II traveled to Portugal and placed the bullet with which he had been shot ten years before in the crown of the statue of Mary at the site of her original apparitions at Fatima. It wasn't till 2000 that the Vatican offered an explanation—and, along the way, revealed what had been called "the third secret of Fatima," a prophesy about a pope gunned down, hidden since it was given by the Blessed Virgin to three Portuguese children on July 13, 1917.

For John Paul II, the pieces all came together: the endless rosaries prayed since 1917 for the "conversion of Godless Russia" as the Blessed Virgin had asked, the "secret" vision of a shot pope she had further revealed at Fatima, the thirteens repeated in the dates, the special devotion to Mary that he marked with the large "M" on his coat of arms—and the truth of human freedom, asserted against the Communist lie.

He had sophisticated philosophical, theological, and historical reasons to see chances for political change where even the good leaders of his time saw only the poverty of the possible. He had poetic and aesthetic reasons, as well, to suppose it all somehow made sense: If "the word did not convert, blood will convert," he said of martyrdom in "Stanislaw," the last poem he wrote before becoming pope. But we cannot understand the man—we cannot grasp

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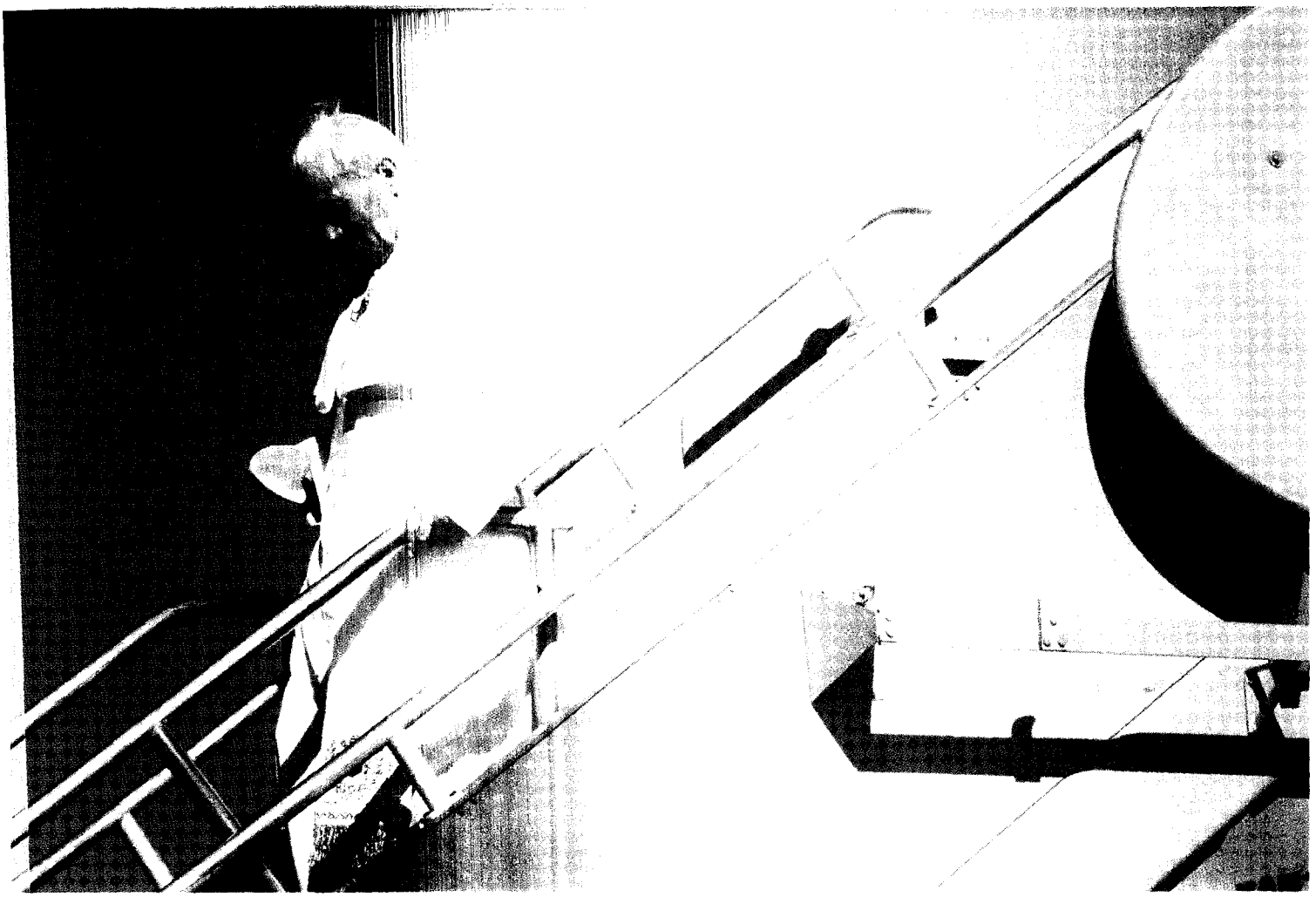

Arriving in Baltimore, February 2, 1995, (opp

how, for him, history was always open to new possibilities—unless we also understand that it was, most of all, a *mystical* truth: the unity of things seen and unseen, the coherence of the spirit and the flesh.

"The intellect of man is forced to choose perfection of the life, or of the work," William Butler Yeats once sadly observed. But this was yet another thinness of possibility—that we can make either our lives or our works beautiful and whole, but not both—which John Paul II refused to admit.

In his magisterial biography *Witness to Hope* (first published in 1999, and soon to appear in a third and updated edition that carries the story through the pope's death), George Weigel reports innumerable telling facts about the life of Karol Wojtyla before he became John Paul II at age 58, the youngest pope in more than a hundred years. His mother died when he was 8, for instance—and then his only brother when he was 12, and his father eight years later: "At the age of 20," he would look back to say, "I had already lost all the people I loved."

But though Weigel reports such facts and the pope's own occasional reflections upon them, he hardly ever draws a psychological conclusion—and he never offers a picture of what Wojtyla's subjective life was like or makes a guess about the interior monologue of his emotional life. On a first reading, this resolute refusal to psychologize may seem odd: People *are* their psyches, after all. We read biographies to understand their subjects, which we do only as we learn who they are and the psychological causes that shaped them into those particular people.

Indeed, John Paul II himself told Weigel in a 1996 interview, "They try to understand me from outside. But I can only be understood from inside." To the general reader of biographies, there is something absurd when Weigel quotes this line—and immediately goes on to describe the "inside" of Karol Wojtyla by mentioning the history of the Nazi and Soviet occupations of Poland, the philosophical necessity for grounding humanism and freedom in the truth about human existence, and the theological centrality of the virtue of hope.

And yet, over the last few years—as the world watched John Paul II teach, even with his death, one last lesson about the shape of human life—it has become clear that Weigel was right to think of the pope in this way. We have millions of words from the man: the 14 major encyclicals, 15 apostolic exhortations, 11 apostolic constitutions, and

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45 apostolic letters; the popular books like *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, scribbled on yellow pads during long plane flights; the scholarly works he wrote as a young theologian; the thousands of prayers and exhortations he delivered during the innumerable audiences he tirelessly gave as pope. And in all those words, there is hardly a hint of what a psychologist would demand: a persona that somehow stands apart from the history through which he lived and the intellectual growth he experienced.

It is not that he was a private person, in the usual way we speak of such people: refusing to discuss themselves and burying their psyches in their public work. It is, rather, that the center of the man—the focal point of his unified life—was the narrative arc of his story: *what* he was and *how* he got that way.

The closest John Paul II came to explaining himself may have been *Roman Triptych: Meditations*, a collection of three poems written during the 2003 papal trip to Poland, which he foresaw would be his last visit home. The only new poetry the pope published during his pontificate, the book is not first-class verse. But it remains fascinating autobiography, for each poem of the triptych shows a man considering human existence in one of its apparently divided aspects: as the life of the artist, as the life of the intellectual, and as the life of the believer. And through all three of the linked poems, the author seeks to express the unity he could always sense was drawing it all together.

Corbis / Reuters

It was a unity that derives, finally, from God's providential purpose in history. But history and Karol Wojtyla's biography grew together, more and more as the years went by, and the divine presence he felt in history joined the divine presence he could feel in the arc of his life. The man *was* his story—and in that story, he could seek perfection of both the life and the work.

Consider just one scene from his early life. When the Nazis began their occupation of Poland in 1939, they were determined to do more than conquer the country. "A major goal of our plan is to finish off as speedily as possible all troublemaking politicians, priests, and leaders who fall into our hands," the German governor, Hans Frank, wrote to his subordinates from the office he established in Krakow's old royal residence, Wawel Castle. "I openly admit that some thousands of so-called important Poles will have to pay with their lives, but . . . every vestige of Polish culture is to be eliminated."

The Nazis' destruction of Poland's Jews was more deliberate and systematic than their slaughter of Poland's Catholics, but the unified goal was clear from the beginning: By the time he was done overseeing the murder of thousands of priests and hundreds of college professors, and the deaths of millions of ordinary citizens along the way, Frank boasted, "There will never again be a Poland."

Among the schemes for the elimination of Polish culture was the closing of all secondary schools and universities—including seminaries. When the 22-year-old Karol Wojtyla entered studies for the priesthood in 1942, the entire Catholic educational system was underground and illegal. The first years of his priestly formation were snatched in secret, usually at night and always while waiting for death to find him as it found so many others in Poland.

When Frank closed the seminary in Krakow, up the hill near Wawel Castle, the German S.S. took over the building and used it for the next five years as an administrative headquarters. And when the Nazis abandoned Krakow on January 17, 1945, as the Red Army's 1st Ukrainian Front closed in on the city, the archbishop—Adam Stefan Sapieha, the "uncrowned king of Poland" who had dared to mock Frank openly—quickly moved to reclaim the seminary before the Russians seized it.

It turned out that, by the end of the war, the S.S. had begun using the building as a makeshift jail, and Sapieha found the seminary with its roof collapsed, its windows shattered, and its rooms scarred from the open fires the inmates had built to keep from freezing. Worst of all was the failed plumbing, and in the hurry to save the building, young Wojtyla and another seminarian were sent in with trowels to clear out the cold, hard feces left by the prisoners.

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In Poland, June 1997: the crowd gathered for mass (above); greeting Lech Walesa (opposite)

Picture, for a moment, that scene: the brilliant 24-year-old—already known among his contemporaries as an actor and a playwright, already clearly destined for great things, already arrived at the fullness of his intellectual powers—chipping away for days in rooms full of frozen excrement.

And contrast it with another scene, 34 years later, when Karol Wojtyla made his first trip to Communist Poland as Pope John Paul II. He arrived on June 2, 1979, and by the time he left eight days later, 13 million Poles—more than one-third of the country's population—had seen him in person as he traveled from Warsaw, to Gniezno, to the shrine at Czestochowa, and ended in Krakow. Nearly everyone else in the nation saw him on television or heard him on the radio. The government was frightened to a hair trigger, and outside observers all had the sense that the Communist regime was doomed, one way or another, from the first moment the pope knelt down and kissed his native soil.

The enormous crowds could sense it, too. On the night of Friday, June 8, tens of thousands of young people gathered outside St. Michael's Church in Krakow for a promised "youth meeting" with the pope. "*Sto lat! Sto lat!*" they shouted over and over: "Live for a hundred years!" Abandoning his prepared speech, John Paul II joked with them—"How can the pope live to be a hundred when you shout him down?"—in an effort to calm the situation. But by 10:30 the emotions of the young crowd had reached a fever pitch.

The temptation for demagoguery must have been enormous: tens of thousands of young Poles—children, really—waving crosses above their heads, chanting in their ecstatic madness for this man to lead them, hungry for martyrdom, ready to trample down the government troops that waited nervously to meet them. A single hint, a single gesture, and the city could have been his—the whole of Poland, perhaps, for the emotion was electric across the country. But all that blood would have been his, too, and he knew the time was not yet right. "It's late, my friends. Let's go home quietly," was all he said, and inside the car that carried him away, John Paul II wept and wept, covering his face with his hands.

For anyone else, these two scenes would stand in contradiction: Once this man was so powerless that he was forced in the middle of a frozen January to clean open rooms that had been used as toilets, but later he was so powerful that thousands of people would have gladly died if he had but lifted his hand. For Karol Wojtyla, however,

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there seemed no contradiction at all. They were both demanded by the vocation to which God had called him. They were both involved with service and obedience. They were both the next thing that needed to be done.

This is the only way to make sense of John Paul II. He spent his life refusing the poverty of the possible, the worldly notion that our choices and explanations are limited to contemporary political categories—and all the apparent contradictions in his thought melt away when we realize he was perceiving options that no one else could see.

With his 1991 encyclical on democratic freedom and economics, *Centesimus Annus*, he issued what is by any objective measure the most pro-Western—pro-American, for that matter—document ever to come from Rome. And then, with the denunciations of the "culture of death" in the 1995 encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*, he issued Rome's most anti-Western and anti-American document. It looks like an impossible combination, until we remember that between them came the 1993 encyclical *Veritatis Splendor*—"The Splendor of Truth," joined with *Centesimus Annus* and *Evangelium Vitae* as the three-part message that formed the central theological achievement of his pontificate. The unity of truth—the only sustainable ground for a healthy society—is what lets us grasp both the rightness of democracy and the murderousness of abortion.

That's not to say his pontificate was an unbroken string of successes. He felt the Christian schism deeply, but his many overtures to the Eastern Orthodox Churches were mostly unrequited, and the healing of Christianity is still far away. He never understood the Middle East with the same clarity that he grasped Eastern Europe, and after the fall of Soviet communism he didn't have the same direct impact on world history. When he opposed the first Gulf War in 1991—and allowed Iraq's murderous deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, to pay a state visit to Rome and Assisi before the second Gulf War in 2003—he seemed to have become locked into a single model for democratic reform, as though Saddam Hussein could be overcome with the same nonviolent, soft-power techniques that had worked in Catholic countries from Poland to the Philippines.

Similarly, he often appeared to have greater success evangelizing the rest of the world than he did evangelizing his own Church. The orthodoxy of the new Catechism he issued in the 1990s and the example of his personal spirituality stopped the slide of post-Vatican II Catholicism into a theological simulacrum of liberal Protestantism. His unique connection to young people—manifested at the huge outpourings for World Youth Day events—created a new generation of "John Paul II Catholics" among young people who have never known another pope. But on the older generations formed before his pontificate, particularly in America and Western Europe, he found little purchase. The liberal Catholic establishment never forgave him for either his failures or his successes, and they blamed him when the American priest scandals became public in 2002—though the priests involved were of the generation formed before John Paul II became pope.

But along the way, he refused to falter. He seems never to have been frightened of anything in his life, and he expected everyone else to share his confident courage: "Be not afraid," he began his pontificate by echoing from the gospel. The 1981 bullet wound slowed him down a little, a 1994 fall in his bath slowed him more, and by the time he reached his 82nd birthday in 2002, he was showing the signs of his impending death. But even at the end he was "a body pulled by a soul" to remain active, as the Vatican official Joaquin Navarro-Valls put it, and his constant motion throughout his life seems breathtaking.

In the 27 years of his pontificate he was seen in the flesh more often than anyone else in history—by over 150 million people, according to one estimate. He traveled to more than 130 countries, created 232 cardinals, and never slowed in the Vatican's endless schedule of audiences, consistories, synods, and meetings. He named 482 saints and beatified another 1,338 people, more than all his predecessors, in his confident belief that the possibility of sanctity was still alive in the world. He produced the first universal Catechism since Vatican II, revised canon law, reorganized the Curia, and made huge advances in Jewish-Christian and Catholic-Protestant relations.

That set of features—his complete courage and his boundless energy—gave him enormous freedom, particularly when combined with his certain conviction that there must exist a way to living in truth no matter how thin the merely possible seemed. He was, in fact, the freest man in the twentieth century. As a measure of his greatness, think of him this way: He could have been a Napoleon. He could have been a Lenin. Instead, he was the vicar of Christ, the heir of St. Peter, steward of a gospel recorded long ago.

History labors down its worn tracks, and the poverty of human possibilities leaves us few choices. Or so it often seems.

But not always. Not while we remember that living in truth is always possible. Not while we remind ourselves of the message of hope preached ceaselessly by Karol Wojtyla. Not while we recall John Paul the Great. ♦

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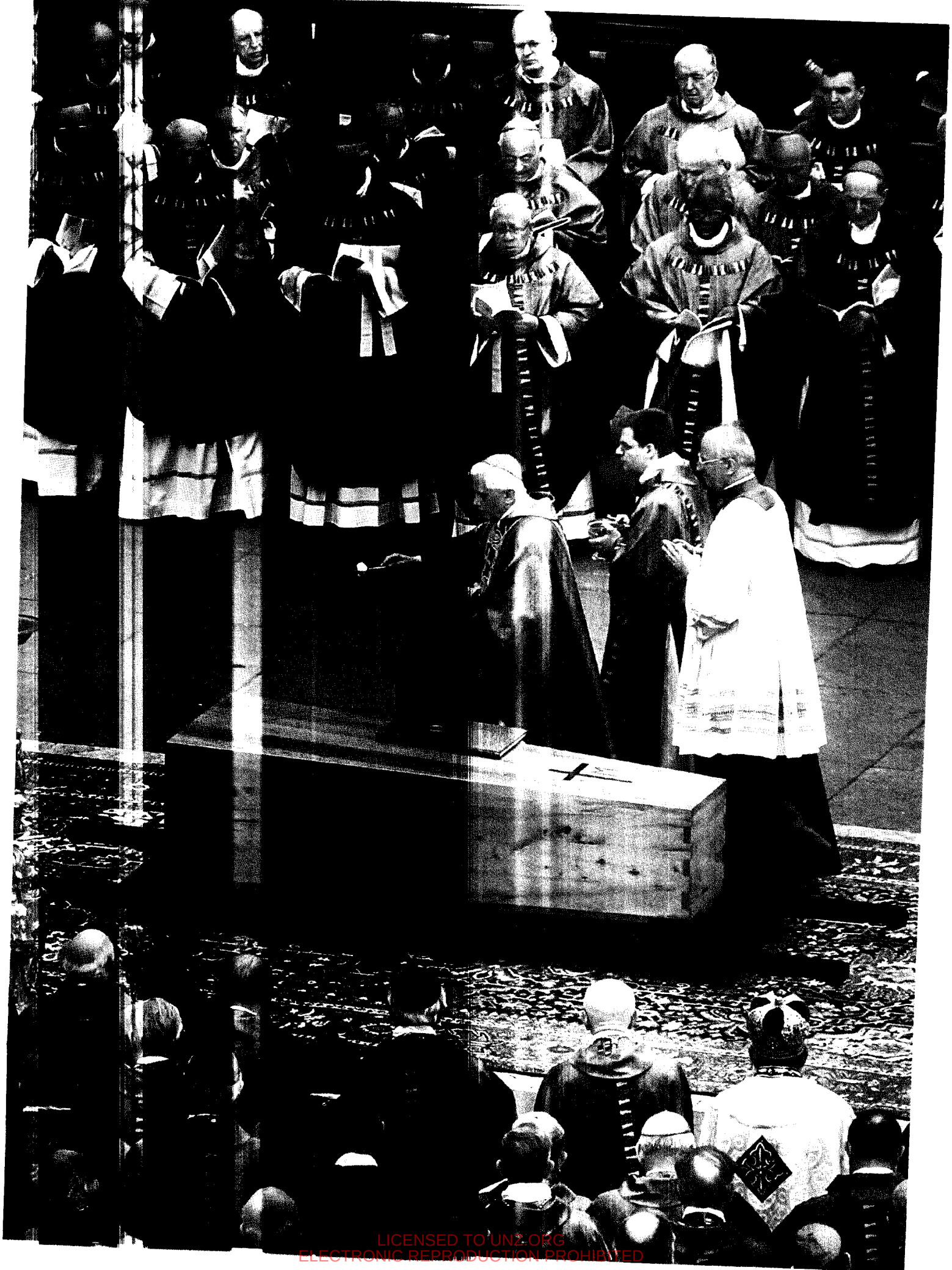

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Robert Mitchum
Jane Greer

The Mystery of Margaret Millar

Why are her novels out of print?

By Jon L. Breen

Under the pseudonym Ross Macdonald, Kenneth Millar became a crime fiction icon. But his Canadian wife Margaret (1915-1994) entered the field first and, through most of the 1940s and 1950s, was the more celebrated.

Though she vocally denied the claim, some critics believe she was her husband's superior as a novelist. A new collection of her short fiction, *The Couple Next Door*, with an excellent scholarly introduction by Macdonald biographer Tom Nolan, invites a rediscovery of her work, tracing the arc of her career with two novellas by the competent but derivative neophyte of the early 1940s and four short stories by the more subtle, assured, and psychologically acute author of her mature work.

While Millar was good from the beginning, no reader of her earliest mysteries would put her in the Ross Macdonald class. *The Invisible Worm* (1941) and *The Weak-Eyed Bat* (1942) established her as a *farceur* in the tradition of Phoebe Atwood Taylor (aka Alice Tilton) and Craig Rice. Her amateur detective, psychiatrist Dr. Paul Prye, is represented in *The Couple Next Door* in "Mind over Murder" (1942), which, despite a promising premise—murder among an assorted group of neurotics at an island Colony for Mental Hygiene in Lake Huron—is not a particularly strong story. Though probably intended for the prestigious and well-paying slick magazine *American*, which featured a short mystery novel in every issue, it wound up instead in a pulp, *Street & Smith's Detective Story Magazine*. *American*'s editors may also have had a shot at the recently discovered "Last Day in Lisbon" (1943), a World War II spy potboiler, nicely enough written in uncharacteristic first-person, but minor, Millar. It landed in another pulp, *Five-Novels Monthly*.

The Couple Next Door
Collected Short Mysteries
by Margaret Millar
Crippen & Landru, 252 pp., $29

The Devil Loves Me (1942) marks a transition in Millar's work. Seeming impatient with lightweight, cozy comedies, she pairs Prye with a much more intriguing and serious professional, Inspector Sands, a Toronto policeman who specializes in middle- and upper-class murder. Prye's wedding is interrupted by the poisoning of one of the bridesmaids. She survives, but murders follow. For all their bright dialogue, the characters are not especially vivid, and many readers will anticipate the murderer, either through guesswork (based on a time-honored misdirection) or at least one very fair clue. While one element of the solution makes the Canadian background essential, the story could take

A frequent contributor on mysteries to The Weekly Standard, *Jon L. Breen is winner of two Edgar awards.*

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place in any North American city. (In a reflection of how times have changed, one character remarks, "We hang everybody in Canada.") While amateur and pro combine to solve the case, Sands gets the final curtain call, and Prye will never appear again.

Millar would return to the wacky, farcical mystery occasionally. *Fire Will Freeze* (1944), in which stranded bus passengers in Quebec ski country take refuge from a blizzard in an old house occupied by an insane elderly woman and her nurse, is reminiscent of the work of Constance and Gwenyth Little, Australian-American sisters who specialized in comic whodunits. Other forays into comedy included *Rose's Last Summer* (1952), with a clever plot based on the tax regulations of the time, and *The Murder of Miranda* (1979), the second novel about Chicano lawyer Tom Aragon. But Millar's lasting reputation would not be built on her humorous books.

Impatience with series characters may partially account for Millar's failure to establish a "brand name" commensurate with the quality of her work. Inspector Sands would appear in only two more novels, *Wall of Eyes* (1943) and *The Iron Gates* (1945), plus the fine title story of the new collection, "The Couple Next Door" (1954), which finds the Canadian cop in California retirement. Millar's novels did without a continuing sleuth for over 30 years, until the not-especially-memorable Aragon made three appearances between 1977 and 1982.

The Iron Gates, a sober psychological study with a well-worked-out puzzle and complex character relationships, gained Millar a Hollywood contract along with increased stature in the suspense fiction field. Lucille Morrow, second wife of Dr. Andrew Morrow, has always had a distant and uncomfortable relationship with her two stepchildren, now well into their 20s but still living in the family home. Lucille is haunted by dreams of her husband's first wife Mildred who, we gradually come to suspect, may have been murdered. When a mysterious small parcel is delivered to Lucille, she vanishes from the house and eventually lands in a mental institution. According to Nolan, Jack Warner's eagerness to film the novel was dampened when both Bette Davis and Barbara Stanwyck turned the project down, not wanting to play a character who dies well before the end.

After three novels more mainstream than criminous, Millar returned to detection with *Do Evil in Return* (1950), about Dr. Charlotte Keating, a general practitioner in an unnamed California coastal city based on Santa Barbara, where the Millars then lived. Having an affair with a married lawyer while treating his neurotic wife as a patient, the doctor becomes involved in the death of a young pregnant woman and is romantically pursued by the cop on the case. The novel is another triumph, with a superb build-up of suspense, including an evocation of the Santa Ana winds to rival Raymond Chandler's, and a well-prepared surprise delivered in a chilling denouement.

Beast in View, the Edgar Allan Poe Award winner for best novel of 1955, is superbly done but at a disadvantage with latter-day readers because the surprise solution, then fresh, has been reused so often since. But the three novels that followed represent the pinnacle of Millar's achievement and retain their powerful impact more than 40 years after publication.

In *The Listening Walls* (1959), Millar brings off a trick that is rarely attempted and even more rarely accomplished: withholding the final surprise to the very last line of the novel. Two San Francisco women in their 30s, unpleasant divorcée Wilma Wyatt and her friend Amy Kellogg, are staying in a Mexico City hotel on what seems an ill-advised vacation. When Wilma falls to her death from a balcony in an apparent suicide, Amy's husband Rupert ostensibly brings her home. But Amy disappears from sight, and her brother Gill becomes convinced Rupert has done away with her. The novel is a psychological puzzle-box, somewhat like the currently popular trend in movies like *Swimming Pool* and *Memento*, the difference being that, in the end, Millar reveals the truth without ambiguity.

The Mexican and American backgrounds are effectively rendered, and the psychology of the characters, however deceptively it is presented, is ultimately sound.

By the author's own account in introducing a 1983 reprint, *A Stranger in My Grave* (1960) began with an idea she had jotted down in her notebook: "A woman dreams of visiting a cemetery and seeing engraved on a granite tombstone her name, the date of her birth and the date of her death four years previously. Write your way out of that one, kiddo."

When Daisy Fielding Harker, troubled wife of a successful real estate broker, has the dream, she goes against the wishes of her overprotective husband and mother to hire bail bondsman and private eye Steve Pinata to help her find out what happened to her on December 2, 1955, the death date on the tombstone. Eventually, they find the real-life tombstone, which bears a different name but the same date of death. Characteristically, Millar shifts the viewpoint from character to character, often in unexpected ways, as the mystery is gradually worked out, with the final surprise again withheld to the very last line.

One of the standard elements of California private-eye fiction is the nutty religious cult. Millar's variation on the theme in *How Like an Angel* (1962) stands as one of the best. Joe Quinn, compulsive gambler and licensed private investigator, is fleeing debts in Reno when he takes refuge for the night at the mountain compound of the Brothers and Sisters of the Tower of Heaven, a shrinking but devout fellowship that has successfully cut itself off from the sinful influences of the outside world. The denizens have taken names like Sisters Blessing, Contrition, and Glory of the Ascension; Brothers Crown of Thorns, Tongue of Prophets, and Light of the Infinite. Initially, the effect borders on the comic, but Millar takes them seriously—not in terms of believing their dogma, but in convincing the reader that they believe it.

Their leader, known as the Master, may be mad or deluded, but he's no charlatan. At great risk to herself,

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Sister Blessing uses $120, sent by her son in Chicago and squirreled away in violation of the sect's vow of poverty, to hire Quinn to go to the Central Valley town of Chicote and find a man named Patrick O'Gorman. Quinn takes the money and, somewhat to his own surprise, carries out the assignment, learning O'Gorman was a respected local citizen who died (his wife says by accident, but the police believe by murder) several years before. The investigation, beyond his initial charge, involves Quinn more and more deeply, and the rest of the complex narrative shifts between the cult's headquarters, the small town, and other California locales. Once again, the truth is gradually revealed, with one last shock withheld for the final lines of the novel.

In *How Like an Angel*, the balance of elements—psychological insight, romance, suspense—achieves near perfection in the finest novel of Millar's career.

In these three novels, Millar's themes, techniques, and concerns resemble her husband's. All three involve upper-middle-class California suburbanites and include private-eye characters. In the last two, the private eyes are the "leads" and, as in a Lew Archer case, the investigation in the present has its roots in a crime a few years in the past. Though Macdonald's books were written from Archer's first-person viewpoint, Millar uses third person, and her perfect command permits her to change course in surprising directions without any loss of narrative impetus.

The manipulation of the reader, with a gradual and selective release of information by the author, is obvious in retrospect—and, sometimes, as it is going on. When the case is put in terms of a private eye's investigation, as in most of *How Like an Angel*, the manipulation is less apparent. Millar's control of her characters and story elements is so sure-footed that occasional lapses (too much exposition in dialogue, use of overheard conversations, unlikely confidences between characters) are easily overlooked.

Millar continued to produce distinguished work and, unlike some writers with long careers, suffered no steep decline in quality. *The Fiend* (1964), about a sympathetically observed pedophile, demonstrates the effectiveness of low-key, understated, inexplicit menace, the threat of violence and horror rather than its graphic depiction. The situation of a little girl with more interest in the neighbors than her own family was foreshadowed in the paranormal short story, "The People Across the Canyon" (1962), collected in *The Couple Next Door*.

In *Beyond This Point Are Monsters* (1970), longtime trial-watcher Millar introduced substantial courtroom action into her work for the first time—a probate action to declare dead a missing fruit-grower who may have been murdered—and delivered another of her patented surprise finishes. After the three novels featuring Tom Aragon and the nonseries *Banshee* (1983), Millar returned to the courtroom for her final book-length work. By this time, her husband had died after a long battle with Alzheimer's disease, and Millar herself was legally blind as a result of glaucoma. But *Spider Webs* (1986), viewing a murder trial from the points of view of various participants, is an outstanding novel and a fine wind-up to her career.

Millar's emphasis on the finishing surprise reflects her admiration for Agatha Christie, who, in turn, cited Millar as one of her favorite contemporary mystery writers. In 1979, Millar was quoted as saying, "I consider Christie an excellent plotter. When I read *Witness for the Prosecution*, I knew she really had a twisted little mind. I wished I had thought of it." In a 1957 interview, she sounded more like one of today's writers who chafe at Christie comparisons: "I happen to be able to *write* rings around her and she happens to be able to *situate* rings around me."

The fact is that Millar, like Christie, plays games with the reader. She never lies but is selective in what she tells—and when she tells it, including following the thoughts of characters that have more on their minds than she reveals, and describing scenes in which one of the characters could be identified but isn't.

While both Millars had more on their minds than the puzzle, they recognized it as the element that made the detective novel a unique genre. They both had an allegiance, for all their interest in psychology and character development, to complex plotting and reader misdirection, providing fairly placed clues even in subgenres (the private-eye novel, the farcical mystery, the psychological study) that sometimes did without them.

Margaret Millar was favorably reviewed throughout her career, and was recognized by her peers with the Mystery Writers of America's Grand Master Award in 1983. Still, her novels are out of print and she is less well known to present-day readers than she should be. Whether she was actually superior to her more famous husband is open to question: If I think so at the moment, rereading a Ross Macdonald or two might change me back again. But she clearly belongs with him in the top dozen North American mystery writers, and some enterprising publisher should get her novels back into print without delay. ♦

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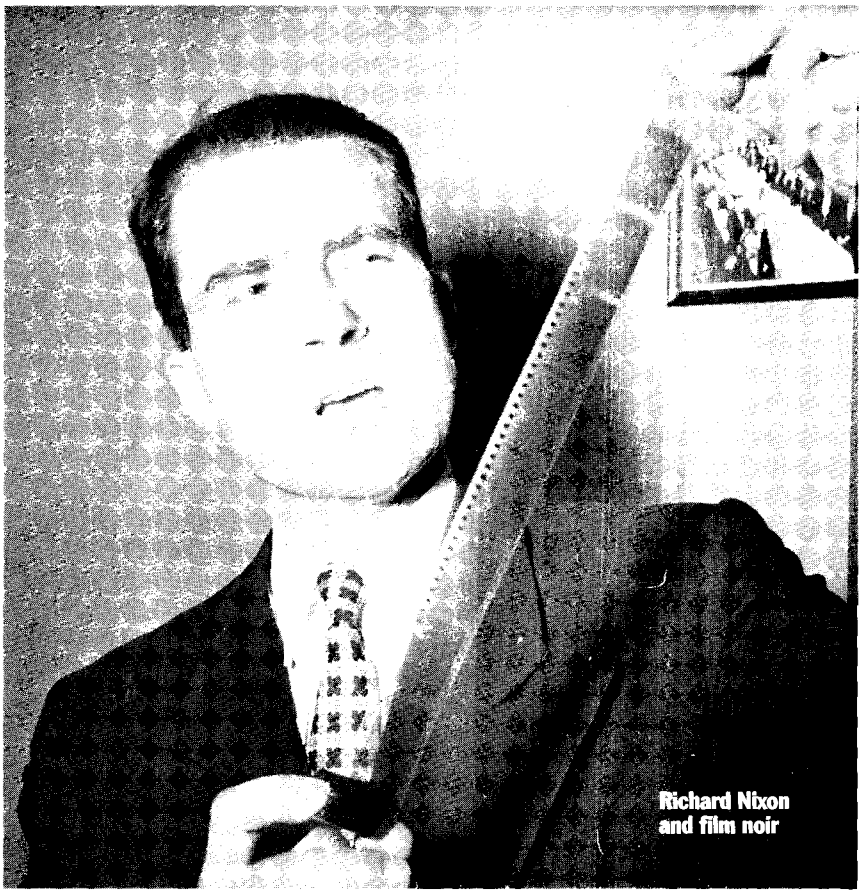

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Richard Nixon and film noir

Lower '48

A pivotal year gets pulverized by metaphors.

BY VICTOR GOLD

Early on in *The Best Year of Their Lives*, Lance Morrow pinpoints "the true end of American innocence" at "just after 8:00 A.M. local time on August 8, 1945, at Hiroshima." Funny, but having been around at the time, I would have sworn it occurred four-and-a-half years earlier, just after 7 A.M. local time on December 7, 1941, at Pearl Harbor.

The Best Year of Their Lives
Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon in 1948
by Lance Morrow
Basic, 312 pp., $26

Of course, to argue that point would be to undercut Morrow's thesis that the cosmic importance of the year 1948 lies in the centrality of its "story of America's attempt to come to terms with its new moral state." Again, you could have fooled me. Granted, I was young at the time, but my vision of the cosmic events of that year was limited to the Berlin airlift, the Hiss-Chambers face-off, Truman vs. Dewey, and the publication of the Kinsey Report; all touched on by Morrow, but only, given the author's penchant for over-the-top metaphor, through a maze, e.g.

> The politics of 1948 had an edginess like that of film noir—an amoral air and sense of venturing into new territory where anything can happen. Postwar power played sometimes in that ominous, shadowed lighting—the atmosphere of things not quite seen, of faces unreadable: of secrets. Raymond Borde and Étienne Chaumeton, the film historians, applied five adjectives to film noir . . .

Ah, yes, how could I have overlooked Borde and Chaumeton's five adjectives defining film noir, not to mention their connection to John F. Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and the edgy politics of 1948? "The film noirs," Morrow tells us, "were vicious dreams, just as suspicions are vicious dreams. It was an age of deep suspicion. Nixon was the quintessential film noir politician." I can hear Sam Goldwyn now: "No, *Joe McCarthy* as the quintessential film noir politician, *Nixon* as best friend."

But wait, there's more: Did it ever occur to you while watching silver screen oldies on late-night cable that, to quote Morrow, "Humphrey Bogart's snarling self-absorption and five-o-clock shadow, in *The Maltese Falcon* and other films, had a Nixonesque quality"? Or that the character portrayed by Lana Turner in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* possessed "the enigmatic capacity for betrayal . . . the same chill—an affectless and amoral ambition—as Richard Nixon"?

If your answer to the latter (like mine) is no, then brace yourself for definitive proof that there is more to the cognation between film noir and the politics of 1948 than meets our unknowing eye:

> It is a geographical curiosity that *The Postman Always Rings Twice* was filmed on the stretch of California coast at San Clemente, which is where Pat Nixon accepted Dick's proposal of marriage, and where the Nixons retreated, wounded and disgraced, after his resignation in 1974.

Still unconvinced? Then hear this: Remember that melodramatic chase through the Vienna sewers in the Graham Greene/Carol Reed classic *The Third Man*? Bet you (as did I) thought it was merely another Viennese chase scene. Wrong again. It was, rather, "the perfect postwar metaphor" for (1) Kennedy's "secret Bay of Pigs design," (2) Johnson's Gulf of Tonkin resolu-

Victor Gold is national correspondent for the Washingtonian, *and author, most recently, of* Liberwocky: What Liberals Say and What They Really Mean.

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tion, and, needless to say, (3) the Watergate break-in and cover-up. Proof in this case being, in Morrow's view, "the secret, invisible, systematic, shadowy rivers of filth" which lay beneath "the crawling hidden amoral life that appeared when an American lifted the rock of normality and morality and looked underneath."

All that, mind you, from a single chapter portentously titled "Brumidi's Frescoes and Film Noir." Heavy stuff. So heavy, in fact, that given space and weight limitations, I will not go into Morrow's take on Constantino Brumidi's frescoes in the U.S. Capitol, except to say that if you're interested in "the mural of Kennedy's mind" or "the lunettes and friezes" of Richard Nixon's, this is the book for you.

Conceded, those of us tone deaf to strained metaphors are given a hint of what's to come by Morrow's primary title, played off *The Best Years of Our Lives*, the Oscar-winning movie of 1946. Not enough of a hint, however, to gird us for such analogic onslaughts as

> In the Western romance with totalitarian communism, there was that strange quality of almost erotic self-surrender. Brute power had a seductive sexual vibration. . . . The impulse lingered through the era of Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon. . . . In *Streetcar*, Blanche's sexual past was a secret that chased her from place to place, as Chambers' Communist past pursued him in the period after he quit the party and went into hiding. . . .

That, to reassure those who might think I am quoting out of context, can be found on page 229, five paragraphs removed from the author's florid description of Marlon Brando's being "smolderingly beautiful as Stanley Kowalski." *Chacun à son goût*: For my part, I preferred Kim Hunter's Stella.

Not that Morrow's fustian style doesn't have its fans. No less an authority on Nixonian film noir than Henry Kissinger says this is "an engrossing book," while the author's former editor at *Time*, Walter Isaacson, finds it "awesomely insightful" in showing "how 1948 helped define modern America and shaped the character of Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon."

As a political junkie of barnacled memory, I'm not about to argue that last point. For Kennedy, it was the year that marked his coming to terms with a diagnosis that told him he would live out his life under the shadow of a potentially fatal disease. For Johnson, it would mean a brutalizing campaign for the U.S. Senate, which, if lost, could end his political career. For Nixon, a mere congressional freshman, a sudden rise to national prominence on being thrust, center-stage, into the biggest spy drama of the century.

All of which Morrow deals with in his own involuted fashion. But after six decades, and a cascade of literature covering three of the most anatomized presidents in modern history, one would hope, in a book *sub*-subtitled *Learning the Secrets of Power*, that something new could be brought to the table, other than LBJ's having referred to his favorite appendage as "Jumbo."

No such luck. Strip away the film noir metaphors and tiresome Freudian overlay (Kennedy-and-his-father, Nixon-and-his-mother), and there is, sad to say, little ground Morrow covers that hasn't already been plowed by Robert Dallek, Stephen Ambrose, Richard Reeves, Robert Caro, and, for that matter, the History Channel.

Bottom line for an old political junkie: Garry Wills meets Pauline Kael. Sorry, I pass. ♦

Wait till Next Year

The Curse of the Barrymore sinks a Red Sox movie.

BY JOHN PODHORETZ

Fever Pitch sets up a triangle between a 30-year-old Boston schoolteacher and his two loves—one a beautiful business consultant, the other a baseball team called the Red Sox. Lindsay Meeks, the business consultant, falls for the person Ben Wrightman is when the Sox aren't playing—a funny, kind, thoughtful boyfriend, and a beloved educator. She calls him "Winter Guy."

But try though she might, she just can't tolerate "Summer Guy," the Ben who blows off her invitation to join her family at Easter to go watch the Red Sox take spring training in Florida. "They need me," he says, which seems self-evident to him and utterly baffling to her. Worse yet, he declines an invitation in September for a free weekend jaunt because the Angels are coming to town.

"Here's a tip," she tells him. "When your girlfriend asks you to go to Paris, you say yes."

This all comes as a particular shock to Lindsay because she feels initially that she's being charitable to Ben by going out with him. She's a hard-driving, high-earning overachiever who spends all her free time working out obsessively and dismisses his overtures because of his lower social standing (her friends refer to him dismissively as "the schoolteacher"). But she is head-over-heels by the time baseball season begins, and suddenly she finds herself no longer the most important person in his life and no longer the most important person in their relationship.

The romance heads toward oblivion the night Ben misses his first home game at Fenway Park in 11 years to accompany Lindsay to a friend's birthday party—a raucous event followed by a moment of profound intimacy. The problem is that the game turns out to be the greatest comeback in Red Sox history. His subsequent meltdown seems to be a dismissal of

John Podhoretz is a contributing editor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD.

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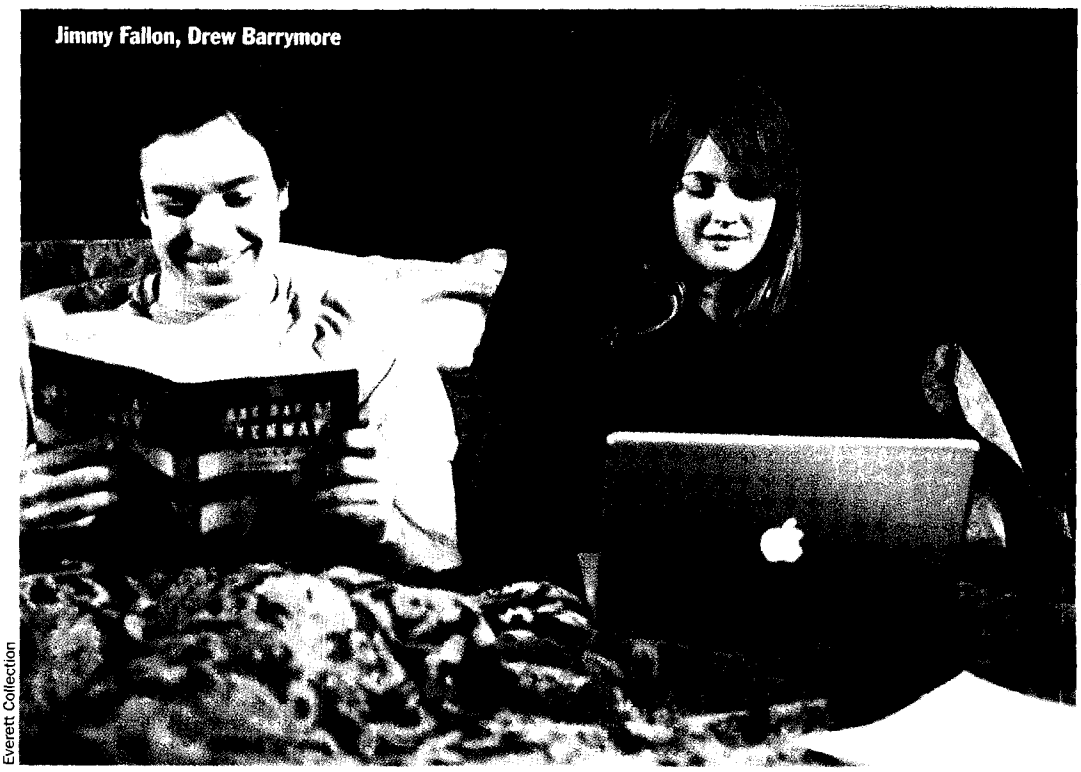
Jimmy Fallon, Drew Barrymore

Everett Collection

her, and it breaks Lindsay's heart.

To defend himself, Ben defends his fanaticism for the Red Sox. "Have you ever cared about anything for 23 years?" he demands. Lindsay replies that, 23 years ago, she was seven years old—and that if she were still obsessed with marrying Scott Baio she would think there was something very wrong with her.

Fever Pitch borrows its name and spirit from the English writer Nick Hornby's first book, a delightful and hugely successful account of his lifelong obsession with the Arsenal soccer team in England. "Sometimes," Hornby writes, "hurting someone is unavoidable" when you care so much about a team. Hornby took that idea and turned his book into a 1997 movie (never released in this country) about an Arsenal fan and his long-suffering girlfriend.

It was an ingenious conceit that might have been borrowed from the opening number of *Damn Yankees*, which features the suffering wife of a baseball fan lamenting her fate: *When we met in 1938 it was November. / When I said that I would be his mate, it was December. / I reasoned he would be the greatest husband that a girl had ever found. / That's what I reasoned. That's what I reasoned. Then April rolled around. / Six months out of every year, I might as well be made of stone. / Six months out of every year, when I'm with him, I'm alone.*

Screenwriters Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, and directors Peter and Bobby Farrelly, have taken Hornby's ingenious conceit and ingeniously relocated it to the environs of Fenway Park. It was sheer dumb luck, or kismet, that they found themselves making the movie last fall, just as the Red Sox were about to reverse their team's 86-year curse and finally win a World Series again. The new movie's creative team rewrote its final scenes on the fly to take account of Boston's triumph over its record of failure, and harmonize it beautifully with the outcome of Ben and Lindsay's romance.

You want to love *Fever Pitch*, because it is so cleverly constructed and stuffed with all sorts of interesting ancillary characters—like Lindsay's hardbodied married friend, Robin, who subtly attempts to sabotage the relationship because Lindsay is more successful than Robin in business while Robin has one-upped Lindsay in the relationship department. More important, it doesn't turn Lindsay into a shrewish baseball widow forever complaining about her boyfriend's lack of attention to her. And it doesn't portray Ben as a sports jerk who becomes ill-mannered and boorish because of his passion.

But there's something terribly off in *Fever Pitch*, and that something is a someone: Drew Barrymore, who plays Lindsay and is also one of the movie's producers. This is Barrymore's first real effort to play someone who is a semblance of a grown human being, and she is just dreadful. Ganz and Mandel have written Lindsay as a clever, literate, and intelligent woman, but Barrymore sounds (as Pauline Kael once said of the acting skills of Cyd Charisse) as though she learned her lines by rote. I don't think I've ever seen anything more unconvincing than Drew Barrymore delivering a monologue about how much she loves mathematics.

Jimmy Fallon, who plays Ben, is as natural and amusing to watch as Barrymore is wooden and painful. The former *Saturday Night Live* star made a disastrous transition to the movies with a flop called *Taxi* last year, but *Fever Pitch* ought to make him a star. He combines good looks with an endearing gawkiness, and that rare ability only a few performers (like Christopher Walken) have of sounding spontaneous—speaking his lines the way people actually talk, as though he's just thinking of them as he's saying them.

Fallon's spontaneity slams into Barrymore's studied affect, and the result is a car wreck. It's not just that they don't have chemistry; throughout the movie they stand next to each other like people on a bus who've never met. You don't believe these two people are in love. You aren't even sure these two people inhabit the same planet. So what we have in *Fever Pitch* is a romantic comedy where everything works except the romance. It's a solid single, maybe even a ground-rule double. But it could have been a grand slam. ♦

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Bosnian Laureate

The mystical poetry of Nikola Sop, translated by W.H. Auden. BY STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

Thirty-six years ago, Melvin J. Lasky, editor of *Encounter*, wrote to a Croatian literary translator living in Canada, B.S. Brusar. The subject was a Bosnian poet of Croat origin, Nikola Sop (1904-1982), whose name is pronounced *shop*.

Encounter published several poems by Sop, in versions first rendered into English by Brusar and then recast by no less a figure than W.H. Auden. They were curious works. Sop was a Christian mystic, a schoolteacher, and a translator of the Latin classics, as well as of Renaissance Croatian poets who also wrote in Latin. But at the end of the 1950s, he began composing uniquely inspired verse about space and the human awareness of the cosmos. He titled a collection of these writings *Astralia*.

Among the best of Sop's poems in this distinctive genre is one titled "Space Visits," published in *Encounter*'s May 1965 issue. Its first section opens, in the Audenized version:

Miracle, miracle.

We are leaning over and looking
At the night overturned.

What used to be above us, high up,
A soaring vault,
Is now flying, moving, swaying,
Deep below us.

Already we have forgotten clouds and winds and rains.
Here at the summit of overturned space,
Are we not ourselves—
Our own breath?

The original poem contains an extra line, between the third and fourth stanzas: "Nothing more above us." The work continues, with 16 further sections, none of them bearing the flavor of science fiction or astronautical adventures. Nonetheless, they engage effectively with the concept of living away from the earth. "Here space comes to an end," Sop writes. Further on, he conjures up alien beings, whom he describes as "Faces unseen until now, though once well known. . . . They come walking, flying, walking, walking."

The poem "Space Visits" concludes with an evocation of the sole common item between earthly creatures and these beings: bread. "Bread they know, bread they break and share: But your face is strange to them."

Sop's publications in *Encounter* comprise two more long poems, "Cottages in Space" (November 1969) and "Space Scene With Rooster" (June 1971), all redone by Auden and co-signed with his name as translator. Unsurprisingly, they do not figure in Auden's 1991 *Collected Poems*, edited by Edward Mendelson. For Auden, they doubtless represented a trivial affair, tossed off at the behest of Lasky. But the English poet wrote generously of Sop as "considered by many of his compatriots to be the best living Croatian poet." This is an exaggeration, for Croatian poetry, like Polish, Czech, and Hungarian verse, produced many great talents throughout the 20th century.

Auden also noted that Sop was "crippled for life during Hitler's bombardment of Belgrade in 1941." Sop returned Auden's admiration, commenting in an interview with the co-translator Brusar, "When 40 years ago in my poetry Jesus appeared as I saw and felt him, he was exactly such as W.H. Auden imagines him in his eminent essay on Christianity and art: Jesus a child, and Jesus crucified . . . Auden is the first to, in a way, object [to] modern technology eager to subjugate poetry, subordinate it, make it celebrate discoveries."

Thus Sop insisted that his "space poetry" had nothing to do with commemorating or extolling the space explorations of either the Soviets or the Americans. "I have been sneaking through space since long ago," he said. One might presume that Sop, as a Croat Catholic, had turned to the furthest skies as a metaphorical place to escape the cult of mechanistic progress under Yugoslav socialism. But he also evoked his childhood in Bosnia in a way that makes his propensity for speculation about the heavens obvious.

Describing the road between his birthplace in the old city of Jajce, the seat of Croat rulers in Bosnia, and Banja Luka, a larger town today controlled exclusively by Serbs, he recalls, "Sometimes, when as a student I walked on the magic way, a dense night caught up

Stephen Schwartz is a frequent contributor to THE WEEKLY STANDARD. *Auden citations by permission of Edward Mendelson.*

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with me, billowing blackly behind me while in front it was only beginning to get dark. And now imagine that distance between me and the night incessantly behind my heels. And how should I not be inspired in such a country. I should not exchange for anything that loneliness."

Melvin Lasky commissioned three more poems by Sop for *Encounter*, but did not publish them. Yet in 1969 Lasky wrote to Brusar with characteristic enthusiasm, promising "we will try to popularize Sop the same way we did [Jorge Luis] Borges." Anybody who met Lasky will immediately recognize him in this remark, for he ran to excess. In reality, although *Encounter* published some stories by Borges in the early 1960s, it could hardly be said to have "popularized" him. Borges remained unknown in Britain for quite a long time, according to a new biography by Edward Williamson. When he came there to lecture in 1963, after three of his stories had appeared in *Encounter*, the sharp-tongued Philip Larkin inquired contemptuously, "Who is Jorge Luis Borges?"

Lasky's effusions notwithstanding, Sop, unlike the Argentine Borges, remains unfamiliar except to readers of his native tongue. He appears in none of the standard, prolific dictionaries and handbooks of world literature, which fill a whole alcove of the Library of Congress—except in the indispensable and always-surprising *Cassell's Encyclopedia of World Literature*, issued in three volumes in 1973. There it is mentioned that Sop depicted "Jesus as a simple man in everyday life." Sop's sensitive face now appears on the currency of Bosnia-Herzegovina, along with that of the country's many other distinguished writers—most of them equally unrecognized outside the South Slav lands.

The very existence of these Auden-edited "space epics" would be forgotten had the Croatian Writers' Association not produced a pocket edition of them, supplemented by other poems, under the title *Auden's Sop*, in 1997. It is still in print, but like other excellent volumes produced in English in Croatia (typically in faultless translations), it does not circulate in the United States.

Bosnia is a country mostly covered, even now, with dense, virgin forest. The deep mysticism of Nikola Sop, his engagement with solitude, night, and transcendence, is familiar to anybody who has spent time in that environment. His vision of the sky overturned, and a platform from which to look down into the void and the stars, has an immediate resonance for those who

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Auden in the 1960s

walk through Balkan nights, when the nearness of the astral bodies and the thickness of the dark seem palpable to all, not just to sensitive children. In "Cottages in Space," again in lines redone by Auden, Sop summons up

Cottages in space, and windows
With a breath-taking view into fathomless abysses.
Open your door, and from your threshold,
Descend to the next cottage,
Swinging through space.
You'll leave no footprints, you'll find no traces.

This fantasy universe returns the author not only to bread, but to other mundane delights, which the son of the Bosnian soil can never leave behind. In "Space Scene With Rooster," which includes an image of Noah's Ark, Sop writes,

. . . already bewitched by transfiguration
I could hardly tear myself away
From the memory
Of strawberries,
Of peaches,
And other tasty
Terrestrial fruits.

It is doubtless of little interest to Anglo-American readers that W.H. Auden should be associated with an obscure Croatian versifier. But there is something more to this tale, something that deserves to be noted and remembered. When he died last year, at the age of 84, the irrepressible Mel Lasky, with his Lenin beard and anti-Stalinist pedigree, was memorialized in most of the Western media only because *Encounter* had been partly financed by the Central Intelligence Agency. Daily obituary writers referred to the magazine as if it had been merely an ideological newsletter for knuckle-dragging commie-bashers.

Thus, Adam Bernstein wrote in the *Washington Post*, "Once called England's 'leading highbrow magazine,' *Encounter* derived its influence not from its circulation—which peaked at about 40,000 in the 1960s—but from its high-profile readership." In reality, no periodical earns its authority by dint of its readers. *Encounter*'s prestige was based on its contributors, its spirit of controversy, and its commitment to excellence. Ian Hamilton was said to have described *Encounter* as "the only literary journal whose publication day he had genuinely longed for during his lifetime." The literary history the Croatian Writers' Association chose to dig out of their memory and preserve is not only that of Auden's Sop, but of Melvin Lasky in London, casting his glance in all directions, seeking new intellectual energies wherever they were to be found.

Those who had no chance to read *Encounter* in its heyday will never know what they missed, and we may never be able to communicate to our children the passion which we brought to such experiences. The Croats, at least, have something tangible to remind them. We owe them a debt of gratitude for reminding us. ♦

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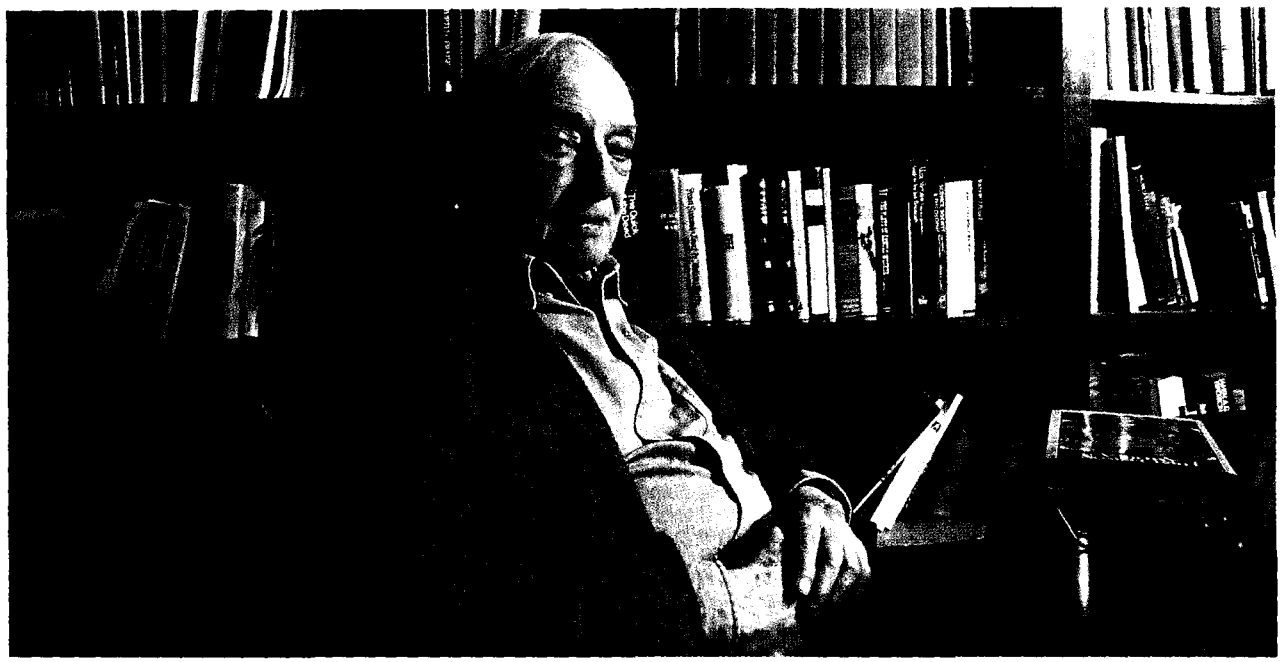
Saul Bellow
1915 – 2005

The Standard Reader



I am an American, Hinsdale-born—Hinsdale, that lily-white suburb. It lies twenty miles west of Chicago, on the old Burlington commuter line, along which trains stop every twenty minutes or so during evening rush hour, coming to rest at Victorian stations with gingerbread trim to unloose a string of lawyers and bankers and brokers after a day's work downtown. To kids like me, growing up in suburban idylls in the 1960s, this is what Chicago meant, mostly: a terminus or a starting point for the trains our fathers rode. Beyond the terminus, we dimly knew, limestone skyscrapers marched straight to the edge of a lake. We saw the lake sometimes in pictures on the evening news.

When a place is so close, and at the same time so far away, you can't help but romanticize it, invent its details and dwell on its mysteries, which may be why, when I first opened the novels of Saul Bellow, in my mid-twenties, I was floored. They still floor me. They're best known for their discursiveness, their wild digressions and mad speculations—has anyone else written a novel, as Bellow did in *Humboldt's Gift*, that meditates seriously on Swedenborgianism?—but what I cherish about them most of all is their sense of place. "I am an American," Augie March writes, "Chicago-born—Chicago, that somber city," and from that first sentence the city is not so much the novel's setting as its indispensable supporting character. By the time I read it I was living far away, but I thought I was getting the inside story about Chicago at last, with an almost scandalous intimacy, as though I was rifling the diary of an old acquaintance.

History, when it happens, can make a shrine of a cornfield or a tumbledown house, and books can do the same. Laid out flat as a griddle, sweltering in summer and packed in ice through its endless winters, Chicago the somber city is transfigured by its books, touched with magic. I can't order a beer at the Berghoff, in the Loop, without a slight lift at the thought that this is the place Dreiser had in mind when he invented Fitzgerald and Moy's, the restaurant managed by *Sister Carrie*'s Hurstwood, the most heart-breaking character in American literature. Bellow's books touch every quarter of the city, and as a Chicagoan, Hinsdale-born, I'll be grateful to him forever. On Madison Street I mark the spot where McVicker's Theater stood, and think of Augie carrying crippled Einhorn up the back stairs to the balcony. Passing Western Avenue on the freeway into town I see the ancient streetcar Woody and Pop rode in Bellow's perfect story, "A Silver Dish": "an old red Chicago streetcar, one of those trams the color of a stockyard steer."

And once, in the late 1970s, I ventured in from the suburbs to the Division Street Baths, on the northwest side. I didn't want a shvitz, though I decided I'd submit to one if necessary. I'd just read *Humboldt's Gift*, which had brought Bellow the Nobel Prize a few years before. I wanted to see where Charlie Citrine met up with Rinaldo Cantabile: "This old establishment has been there forever, hotter than the tropics and rotting sweetly."

The guy at the counter wore a strapped T-shirt and chewed a Swisher Sweet. He turned from his stack of towels to size me up. Fresh from the suburbs.

"You read that book, huh?" he said. He looked just the way Bellow said he would.

—*Andrew Ferguson*

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Papal Election

FUNNY HAT. *From A1*

demographic shifts from papal race to papal race. Back in 1978, the Pope ran strong among Sicilian "numbers moms." This year, it's "jihad dads"—African Catholics who have had to rebuild their churches after they were burned to the ground by pillaging parties. Hence the popularity of the Nigerian Arinze.

"It's not Nigerian parishioners they're trying to woo," says analyst Charlie Cook. "It's suburban women who want to know the church is open to Nigerians."

That may play better in the blue dioceses than it does in the red ones. At Bertone headquarters, where the party's youth wing, many of them under 75, were dancing to "Only Sistine," lay activist Miller Brewer warned that the base would not be taken for granted. "Our idea of a priest is Father Steve," said Brewer. "Not Father Eve." Still, the race will likely be an uphill battle for the conservative Angelo Scola, Patriarch of Venice. "The doges aren't eating that dogefood," said Cook.

A blistering New York Times editorial Tuesday ("Invasion of the Theocrats") warned that the papal selection process was focusing on religious issues.

Analyst Michael Barone finds that natural. "Popes need to learn to talk about religion," he said. "It's a 50-50 oecumene." None of the papabili have succeeded in getting a fundraising edge, but a $10,000-a-card bingo evening hosted by Ed Asner, Whoopi Goldberg and Tim Robbins has launched Cardinal Ratz-

See PETERED OUT, *A5, Col.1*

the weekly Standard

APRIL 18, 2005

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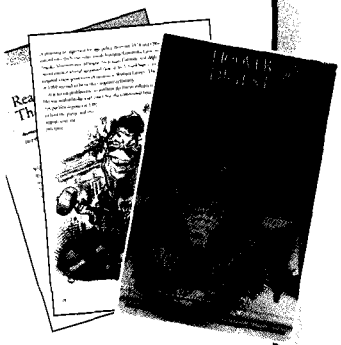

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In the new issue of the Hoover Digest

Bringing Democracy to the Middle East

There is a demographic time bomb ticking in the Middle East, and it is going to sweep away a lot of Western-leaning regimes unless true reform begins soon.
By Larry Diamond

The Arab world is the only major region that does not have a single democracy. If we look at the Middle East in general, only Israel and Turkey are democracies. Of the 16 Arab states, only Lebanon has ever been a democracy, and only a few could be described today even as semi-democratic. Whereas the rest of the world has been moving toward democracy and greater freedom over the past three remarkable decades, the Arab world has remained politically stagnant. In fact, the Arab region is the only part of the world where the average Freedom House rating of political rights and civil liberties is worse today than it was in 1974. . . .

To the extent that Arab regimes do not reform politically and economically, they will erupt in one form or another over the coming years. What Thomas Friedman calls the "global supply chain" of suicide bombers is one form of eruption. The wave of venomous anti-Americanism is another. The rising tide of terrorist attacks inside Saudi Arabia is another. Sclerotic regimes that cannot generate jobs and hope at a faster rate than the population is growing cannot persist indefinitely. And the market-oriented economic reforms necessary to unleash economic growth are unlikely to occur without democratic change because, unless governments have much greater political legitimacy, they will not have the nerve, or the autonomy from the decades-long accumulation of vested interests, to take bold and difficult steps.

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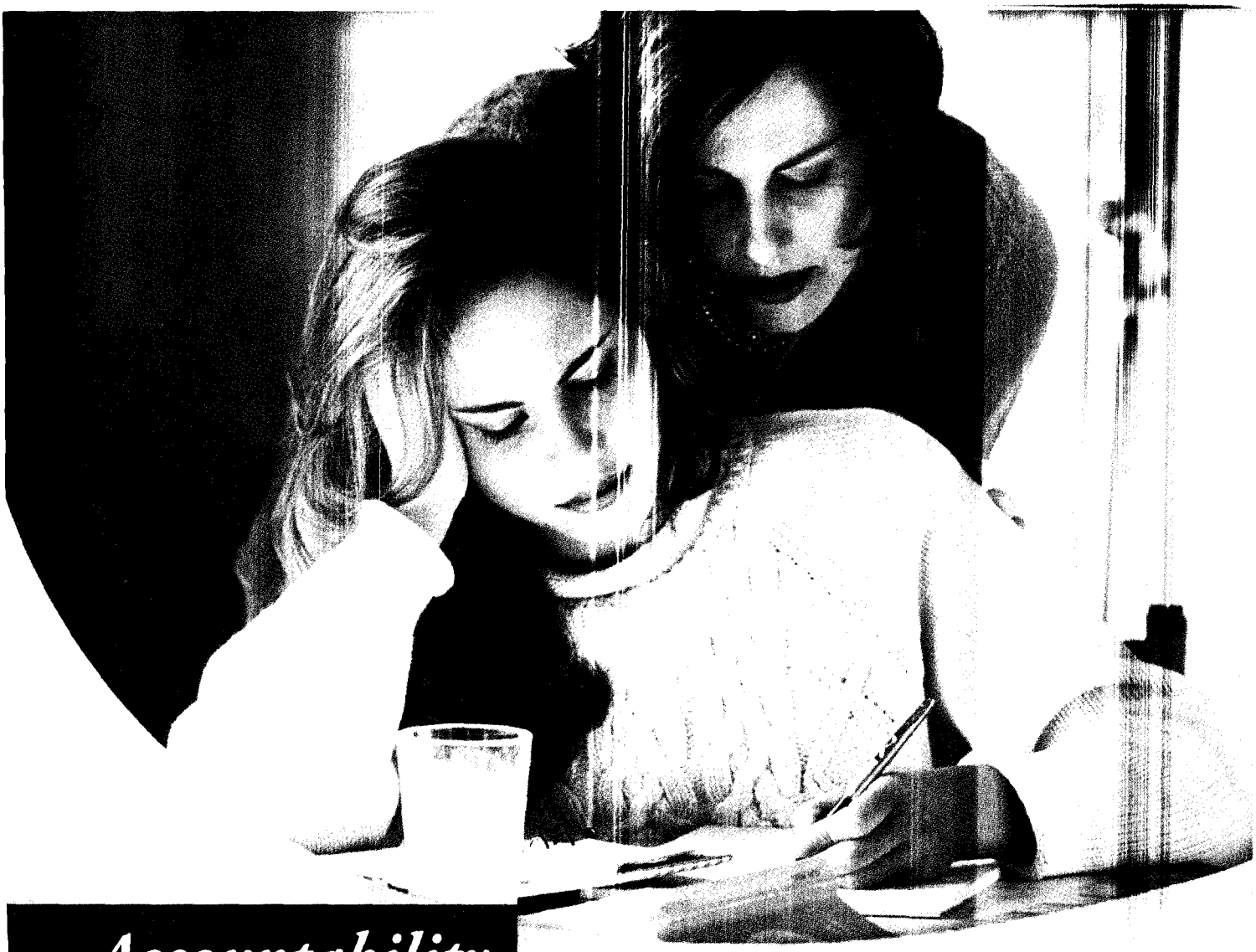

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